Commentary

Volume Fifty-six, Number Six, December 1973

FROM 1967 TO 1973

THE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS

THEODORE DRAPER

KISSINGER & THE POLITICS OF DÉTENTE

Walter Laqueur

Men, Women, and the Parental Imperative
David Gutmann

Auden's Achievement
Clive James

Images of Einstein
Jeffrey Marsh

TV Vérité
Jane Larkin Crain

Books in Review:
Elliott Abrams
Dorothy Rabinowitz
Murray Friedman
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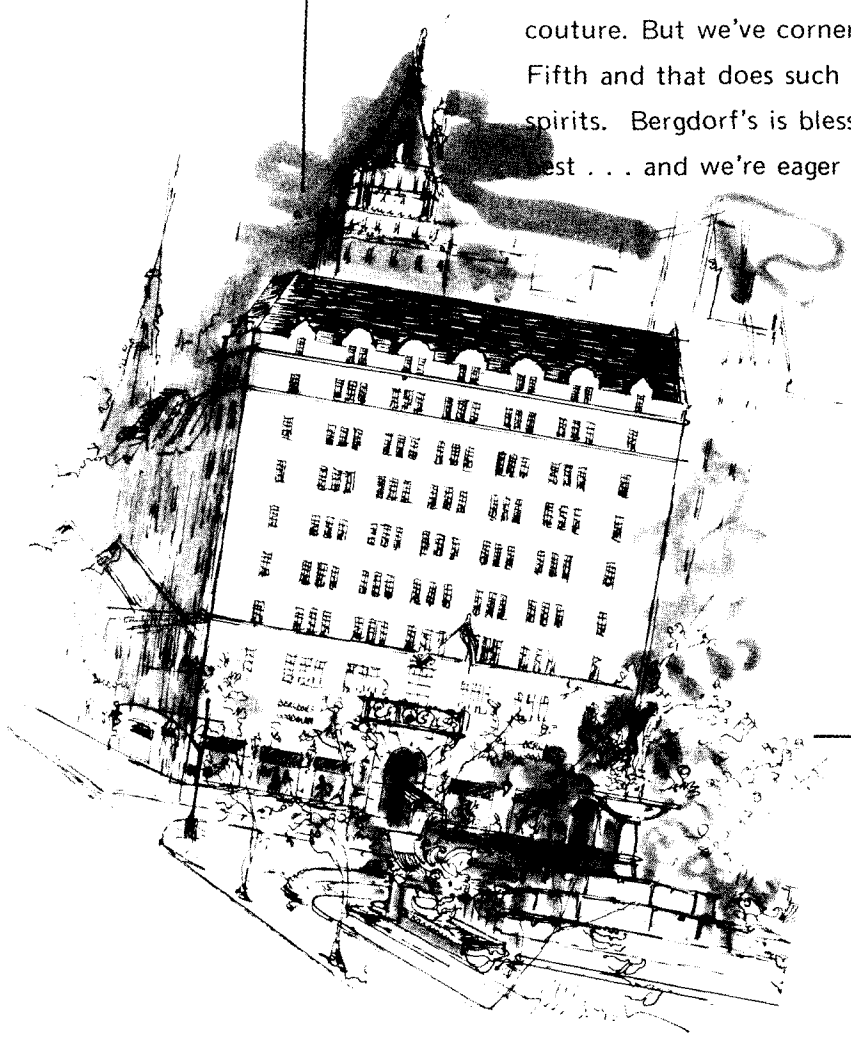

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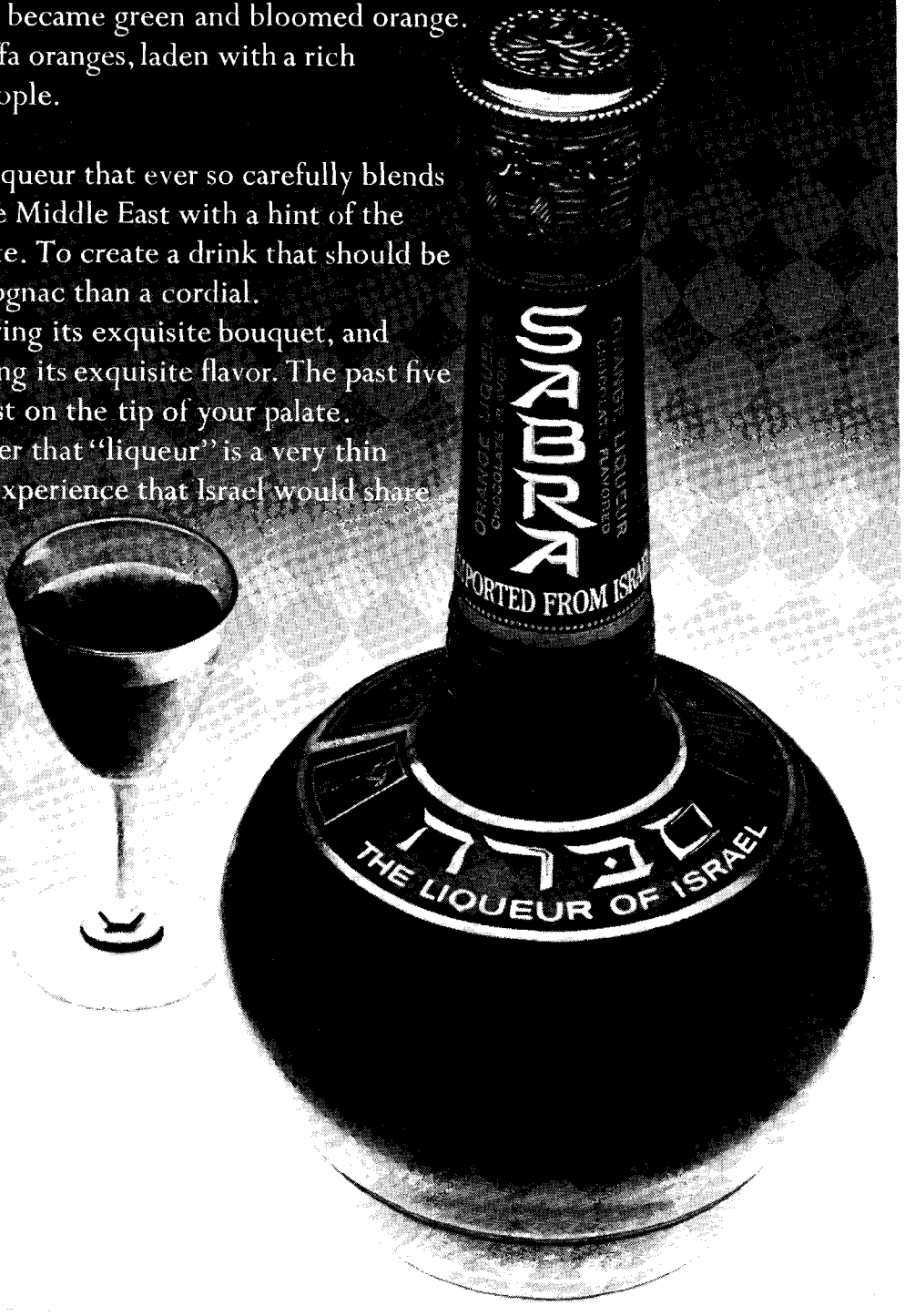

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Letters from Readers

Understanding Watergate

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab ["An Appointment With Watergate," September] have analyzed Watergate brilliantly and imaginatively. I would have expected the expert way in which they have developed the radical Right setting. But I am instructed by the precision with which they have established Nixon's own ambience between the Right and Center of his party, which goes far to explain events both before and after the break-in.

I am disappointed, however, that the authors at the conclusion of this otherwise superb piece redefend their attitude during the 1972 election. They point out correctly the mistaken calculation of Nixon and the men around him that left-wing violence in the United States was likely to continue, then they themselves seem to equate McGovern with extremist positions even as they did a year ago. Can it be that just as Nixon in 1950 could so set the terms of the debate that he could lead the liberal Helen Gahagan Douglas to enunciate anti-Communist clichés, so can he in 1973 persuade two such sophisticated scholars to echo his tired shibboleths?

FRANK FREIDEL
Department of History
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"An Appointment with Watergate" is extraordinarily informative. It contributes some important new perspectives on President Nixon's role in the Watergate affair, with challenging implications for our understanding of the American political system. It should open a new stage of serious debate.

The next step in this debate should be to link what the article says with what it did not stress but perhaps should have stressed. The basic issues of American politics now may be how to close out the transitory stage of imperial intervention and adventures in our foreign policy, particularly in Asia and Latin America, how to loosen the one-sided and rigid grip of the old military-industrial and cold-war elements on large parts of our political system; and how to build up government into an effective steering organization to deal with our ever more urgent domestic problems of inflation, stagnation, excessive inequality, and inadequate public health and social justice.

Too many people are trying to preserve the policies and practices that gave us Watergate and that may give us worse to come. Too many people are trying to preserve and enhance international tension and domestic neglect. Too many special groups are digging in to defend their small privileges, old or new, which blind them to the larger dangers to world peace and to their own survival. If world peace is allowed to break down from neglect, we all may end up holding first-class cabin reservations on a sinking ship.

KARL W. DEUTSCH
Department of Government
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The framework offered by Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab is not very helpful, despite its insights, in understanding what has come to be called Watergate. The degree to which the authors have tried to force the facts into their paradigm becomes evident when they offer the following Nixon quotation as an example of Nixon's cosmopolitanism . . . : "There are some who claim that administration officials failed to act because they were Communist or pro-Communist. But the great majority of our officials were not in this category, and I cannot accept this accusation as a fair one."

This statement is a clear example of the classic Nixon style of planting an accusation and then separating himself from it, precisely what was meant by those who called Nixon a white-collar McCarthy. We should also recall his speeches defending Adlai Stevenson's loyalty when nobody had ever questioned it. . . .

The fact is that the paranoid style and ideological politics are not synonymous, even if they often are found together. Nixon's so-called shifts may be viewed as provincial or cosmopolitan—or they may be viewed as consistently pragmatic and non-ideological, and consistently paranoid in style. In such a context, it is easier to

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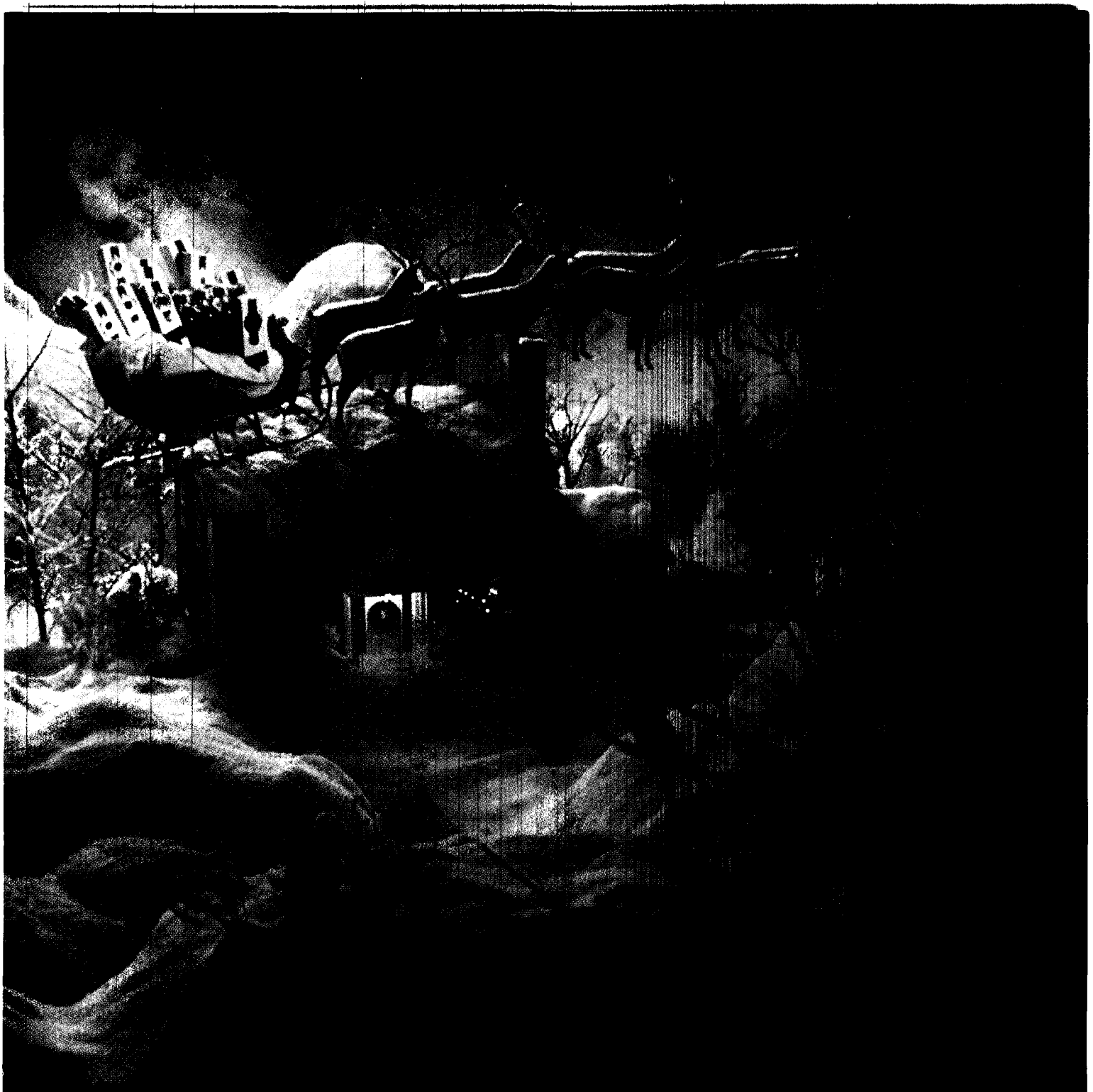

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understand Cambodia, Watergate, wheat sales, wiretaps, and trips to China.

Watergate is better understood as a further example of the concentration of power in the national executive in post-industrial society. For that reason, Messrs. Lipset and Raab perform no service by minimizing, despite their protestations to the contrary, the seriousness of Watergate. The bungled burglaries were only one part of the unchecked use of executive power, the prime example of which was the conduct of a war in Cambodia without the knowledge of the Congress or the people. Those bungled burglaries were, therefore, lucky accidents which served to put a brake on the use of executive power. It is such power in dictatorial proportions which needs to be seen as the major danger. That's the lesson of Watergate, rather than the ebb and flow of American backlash. . . .

DONALD FELDSTEIN
Fairleigh Dickinson University
Teaneck, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I was dismayed by "An Appointment with Watergate." . . . Not only do Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab minimize the acts committed by the White House . . . not only do they fail to mention Sam Ervin . . . but, having decided to reduce the whole affair to an analysis of Nixon's psychological behavior, they make light of the true significance of Watergate. For Watergate is not only a product of the behavior of one man . . . it is the result of a specific institutional development. Any analysis of the situation must begin with the fact of the enormous concentration of powers in the hands of one man, . . . powers that exist because of the vacuum created by the people's abdication of their own power. . . . I was recently in the United States (April and May of this year) and I can confirm the total absence of public reaction . . . (no outcry, no protests, nor any demonstrations in places of work, in the streets, or even on the campuses). It is as though every four years the so-called sovereign people turn their power over to one man, and then remain totally uninterested in politics until the next Presidential election. The number-one problem of the Watergate affair is the possibility it raises of citizens and their representatives totally relinquishing their control over the government. . . . But the unraveling of the affair also reveals certain facts which allow one some hope for the future of American democracy. . . . The action of the courts, the press, and the Senate, following upon the general abdication of the American people and most of their representatives, constitutes a last line of resistance.

Watergate concerns us also in Europe because we can see . . . the same . . . deterioration of the democratic system at work here, the same tendency toward an authoritarian Presidential system, which, judging from past history, can only have a corrupting effect. . . .

W. RABI
Bensançon, France

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab offer an intriguing comparison of extremism and the fear of conspiracy in the 20's and the late 60's, but their conclusion is puzzling. They assert that Americans are more willing to accept cultural and political differences in our own time than during the KKK era, but they severely hedge their optimism by suggesting that this tolerance can be easily upset by ideological factionalism on either the Right (provincialism) or the Left (cosmopolitanism). Despite the spectacular rise in the number of college graduates and the disappearance of the most blatant forms of racism, the unhappy truth is that the Klan mentality is alive and well in the United States.

KENNETH T. JACKSON
Department of History
Columbia University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article on Watergate is one of the few relatively informative and dispassionate summaries on the subject that have been published in the U.S. But . . . one can still distinguish some typical academic blindspots. . . . Thus, it is fashionable . . . to imagine certain conspirators and unfashionable to imagine others, and the article left one with the impression that it is largely and inevitably the political Right (in both its Whig and Tory manifestations) which hears plot-

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ters under the bed. For example, George Wallace, mentioned as an "extremist" in the article, certainly uses salty language, but I can't at the moment recall his ever having set up a conscious, coherent conspiracy as a political target. On the other hand, I can't recall a single significant public statement by Ralph Nader which does not directly or by implication set up such a target.

The White House might never have fallen into this trap of its own making if it had only consulted with a historian of 19th-century anarchism who could have described that movement and placed the American new radicalism in a chain of descent from it rather than from conspiratorial Leninism. . . .

JOHN W. BOWLING
Troy, Alabama

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . What brought the rough campaign tactics of the Nixonians into public focus was nothing but an explicitly political event: the Senate hearings (not the election of 1972). Because such tactics were not peculiar to Nixon's campaign, reasonable men might wonder why they have caused so much indignation. This wonder is perhaps dispelled to some extent by reflecting that Nixon won with the support of the core element of the coalition which has maintained Democratic hegemony since 1936. Moreover, he won without much organized support from Eastern establishment Republicans. If Nixon had lost in 1972, or even if he had won by a margin similar to that of 1968, there would have been little need for, and no interest in, the calumnies and accusations which we saw this past summer.

. . . Messrs. Lipset and Raab's argument is complicated by their rehash of opinions—formed in the reaction to McCarthyism—about "conspiracy theories." From their point of view, provincials tend to formulate "conspiracy theories," whereas cosmopolitans understand that political events are moved by "social forces.". . . But "conspiracy theories" are one thing and genuine conspiracies quite another. If we construe political "conspiracy" broadly as the use of private or secret, i.e., publicly indefensible, means to public ends, then we would have to conclude that conspiracies are at least as much a part of American politics as the authors believe "conspiracy theories" to be part of the American political tradition. . . . Why then should Nixon's use of covert means become a matter of such great public indignation? In raising this question, I run the risk of being accused of being soft on Watergate; I do not ask it rhetorically, however.

Messrs. Lipset and Raab make the claim that some hidden "social forces" necessitated our "appointment with Watergate." Perhaps from the point of view of God, this is true. I don't know. But this much seems obvious: real men have been dishonored, whether justly or not is still controversial; foreign and domestic policies once widely acclaimed have now become suspect. What is more, the discrediting proceeds almost entirely on the basis of deliberations which scrupulously avoid mention of the substance of Nixon's policies and actions. Such formalism is not new. It is a nice way of purging partisan humors: surely Messrs. Lipset and Raab remember the days when the question of whether or not our policy toward Russia and China was altogether sound was replaced by the question, "Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist party?" I don't know what the authors think of this summer's purging; they seem to be above it. Still, for those of us dwelling below, caught in the play of the "social forces," the serious question of whether Nixon can or should subvert the heirs of the New Deal on the basis of the New Deal coalition still remains open.

Those golden days of "pragmatic democracy," when Senators Stennis, Humphrey, and Dirksen could sit down in private and hammer out a civil-rights bill or a war on poverty while the sweet voice of reason boomed above, are gone. Messrs. Lipset and Raab may long for their return, and maybe consensus politics should return. But the American experience reveals that lasting consensus is the consequence of bitter partisan struggles—struggles rather like the Watergate investigations in some cases—because a consensus is the opinion of the ruling party.

JOHN A. WETTERGREEN
California State University
San Jose, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I thoroughly agree with Sey-

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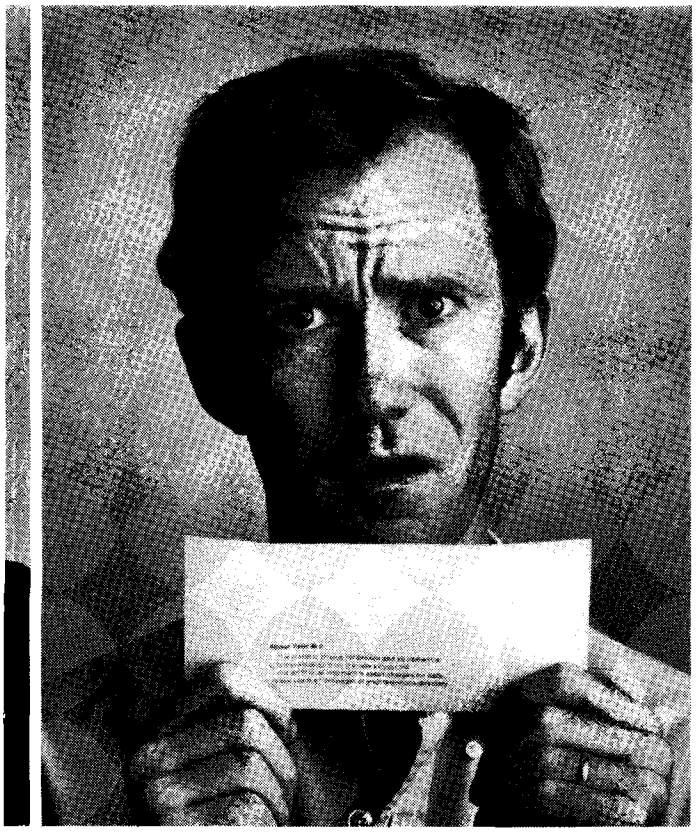

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mour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab's picture of the sense of "conspiracy" behind the protest movements of the late 60's. But I have some misgivings about the explanation they give: "In each case, an important segment of the American population felt that it was being displaced in power and status; in each case, this feeling generated a cultural and moralistic 'backlash.'" . . . I wonder if this is a fair presentation of the motives of those who elected the winners of 1972, no matter how badly their choices have turned out!

One difficulty is the ambiguousness of generalization. It's surprising how wide a span of human motivation can be encompassed in that phrase "power and status." One visualizes mean little bankers clutching their moneybags from grasping black fingers, but the following projection fits the generalization just as well.

Suppose I'm a middle-class Wasp, parent of a sixteen-year-old girl. . . . My daughter runs a thousand miles away from home to join a hippie camp. . . . I think most of us will grant there's a good chance of her reappearing on my doorstep in a couple of years with no husband and a child under each arm. . . .

Alas, I don't live in a hypothetical future social utopia; I must deal with society as it exists in the here and now, meaning a material blow to my "status" and my "power." . . .

It may be objected that this case evades the issue; Messrs. Lipset and Raab's protagonists, after all, were urban blacks as well as intellectuals and academics. So this time, let me be a Jewish tailor in some . . . city slum. . . . I've spent years saving up enough to go into business, and thereafter some decades in building my business into a good living. Then come black liberation . . . and black boycotts. My business slumps, my insurance climbs out of sight, my debts are uncollectable, and my physical existence becomes intolerably precarious. Nor can I pull out short of ruin. . . .

Here again I'm a representative of "an important segment of the American population," being displaced in status and power—and my values are being challenged at the same time. . . . Lifelong Democrat that I am, I might feel strongly enough to join the "backlash" vote. . . .

I guess what I'm trying to say is that "backlash" in 1972 was never a simple business of haves versus have-nots. Or if it was, in the course of climbing to full citizen status have-nots are as likely to violate morals and reason as those they seek to displace; it serves neither morality nor reason to focus all our attention on the imperfections of one side. More than in most areas, we need here to fight shy of grand social generalizations.

ALFRED B. MASON
Huntington Beach, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "An Appointment With Watergate" Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab refer in passing to the Brookings Institution as one of "the largely government-financed 'think tanks.'" May I correct this misconception? For reasons which will be clear to anyone who has given thought to the problems of preserving the independence of a public-policy research institution, we have steadfastly avoided substantial reliance on government financing. For the last five years, the ratio to our total operating expenditures of funds derived from federal government grants and contracts has been as follows:

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1972	8.5	"
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KERMIT GORDON
The Brookings Institution
Washington, D.C.

SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET and EARL RAAB write:

We do not want to argue anew the role of Senator McGovern in 1972 with Frank Freidel. We never suggested that he was an extremist. Rather we contend that he behaved as a factional spokesman in a political system which requires that the Presidential nominee of a major party accept the fact that he is the leader of a coalition. McGovern, like Goldwater before him, treated those who had disagreed with his policies as immoral, and thus made impossible the creation in 1972 of an anti-war coalition that would embrace those Democrats who had at one time supported the war. As the sponsors of the vicious Republican "dirty-tricks" campaign recognized, such a coalition could have formed around the candidacy of Senator Muskie or even Senator Humphrey and might well have defeated Richard Nixon for reelection.

Karl W. Deutsch raises important issues about the future of American politics which go well beyond the scope of our article. His point is well-taken that the petty concerns of various special groups may prevent the American government from dealing effectively with urgent domestic and international problems. We would urge him to propose some solutions to the dilemma, although we do not deny our own responsibility to try to do the same.

Donald Feldstein, properly, is opposed to the tactic of "planting an accusation and then separating himself from it," which he suggests is the essence of what we described as Nixon's cosmopolitan streak. But surely he does not believe that Nixon was the primary agent of "red-baiting." The fact remains that in earlier internal debates among Republicans and conservatives, Richard Nixon on various occasions did denounce those in his own camp who sought to link their opponents to subversive conspiracies. He understood the danger that extremism posed—to his own ambitions if nothing else. Some of his speeches to this effect were

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made to audiences that did not relish such views.

Mr. Feldstein, like W. Rabi, views Watergate as an example of the "unchecked use of executive power," and believes that things are getting worse in this regard as time goes on. But the fact is that, unlike the Nixon administration, earlier administrations engaged in *public* efforts to intimidate their opponents by branding them as agents of foreign-based conspiracies. From the Alien and Sedition Acts of the Adams Federalists, through President Grant's denunciation of Catholic conspirators, to Attorney General Palmer's raid on radicals and aliens, such attempts were made openly with the assumption that the public was behind them. Those who undertook the Watergate break-in and the "White House horrors" (in John Mitchell's phrase) operated in secret; they did so because, as J. Edgar Hoover recognized, the climate of American opinion had shifted decisively. Hoover, as former Acting FBI Director Ruckelshaus pointed out, felt that it had become impolitic to continue various illegal procedures the FBI had employed in the 1950's. Given such changes, we also cannot agree with Kenneth T. Jackson's conclusion that "the Klan mentality is alive and well in the United States." It is alive, but it is far weaker than it was in the era of the second Klan about which he has written so perceptively.

As for Mr. Rabi's observations that the American people are indifferent to the efforts of repression, we would note the inability of the government in recent years to find juries willing to convict radicals and black militants, something which was not the case in earlier decades. Beyond this, we would reiterate these points in our article: there was considerably less repression of anti-war activity or of radicals in the 60's than of comparable phenomena in previous eras; during a war against a Communist opponent, restrictions on the rights of Communists broke down; those who tried to repress dissent had to operate *covertly*, and, therefore, failed.

It is true, as John Bowling states, that George Wallace never "set up a conscious coherent conspiracy as a political target" in his national campaigns. He is much too clever a politician to have done so. But as we noted in *The Politics of Unreason*, he repeatedly invoked a kind of conspiracy surrogate, traitors abroad, the intellectual elite at mischief at home. And he was able to mobilize a veritable army of believers in conspiracy theory, Birchers and others, behind him. The chairman of his American party, T. Coleman Andrews, stated: "I believe in the conspiratorial theory of History. . . . People are beginning to see that . . . [the Birch Society's] original theories were right . . . There is an international conspiracy." As to the question of whether Wallace is an "extremist," the record is clear that in his campaign speeches he repeatedly stated his determination to eliminate the sources of evil in America without regard to due process or constitutional rights. For example, he denounced intellectual critics of the Vietnam war as "those longhairs [who] ought to be treated as traitors, which they are." His solution to the problem of riots was to "let the police run this country for a year or two and there wouldn't be any riots." He stated that in his administration there would be "a police state for folks who burn the cities down." He said the way to handle violent demonstrators was to announce that "the first man who throws a brick is a dead man. The first man who loots something which doesn't belong to him is a dead man."

John A. Wettergreen seems to believe that concern over the "White House horrors" is largely motivated by partisan considerations. He asks why the attacks on "Nixon's use of covert means" were made without "mention of the substance of Nixon's policies and actions." The answer is that whatever may be guessed about the behavior of other politicians, no evidence has ever been assembled to suggest that as many comparably high-placed members of any previous administration were so deeply involved in secretly trying to subvert the political process. The issue here is not Richard Nixon's social policies but the deliberate effort to defeat political opponents by illegal and other undemocratic means.

Alfred B. Mason seeks to give us some insight into the ways some people react to threats against whatever power or status they have. We can only sympathize with this effort, but to "understand" why decent people are led to believe that events which disturb them are traceable to a conspiracy does not make their analysis true, nor does it modify the disastrous consequences that such beliefs can have for the democratic process.

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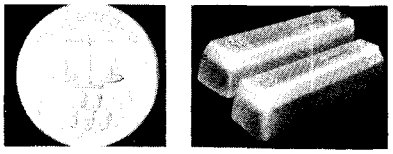

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Key 73

To the Editor of Commentary:

Key 73 ["The Conversion of the Jews," by Marshall Sklare, September] never posed a serious threat to Jewish life. That it was seen by American Jews as a "Jewish issue" says far more about the dynamics of Jewish institutional politics than it does about Key 73. That is too bad, not only because of the very considerable damage that was done to Jewish-Christian relations, but primarily because the hysteria that was engendered deflected attention from serious problems that affect the vitality and integrity of American-Jewish life in ways that even the most intensive Christian conversionary efforts never could.

When I stated publicly nearly a year ago that those who saw Key 73 as a serious threat to Judaism were misinformed and unduly alarmist, professional Jewish ecumenists went into paroxysms of rage. (See "Christian Evangelism

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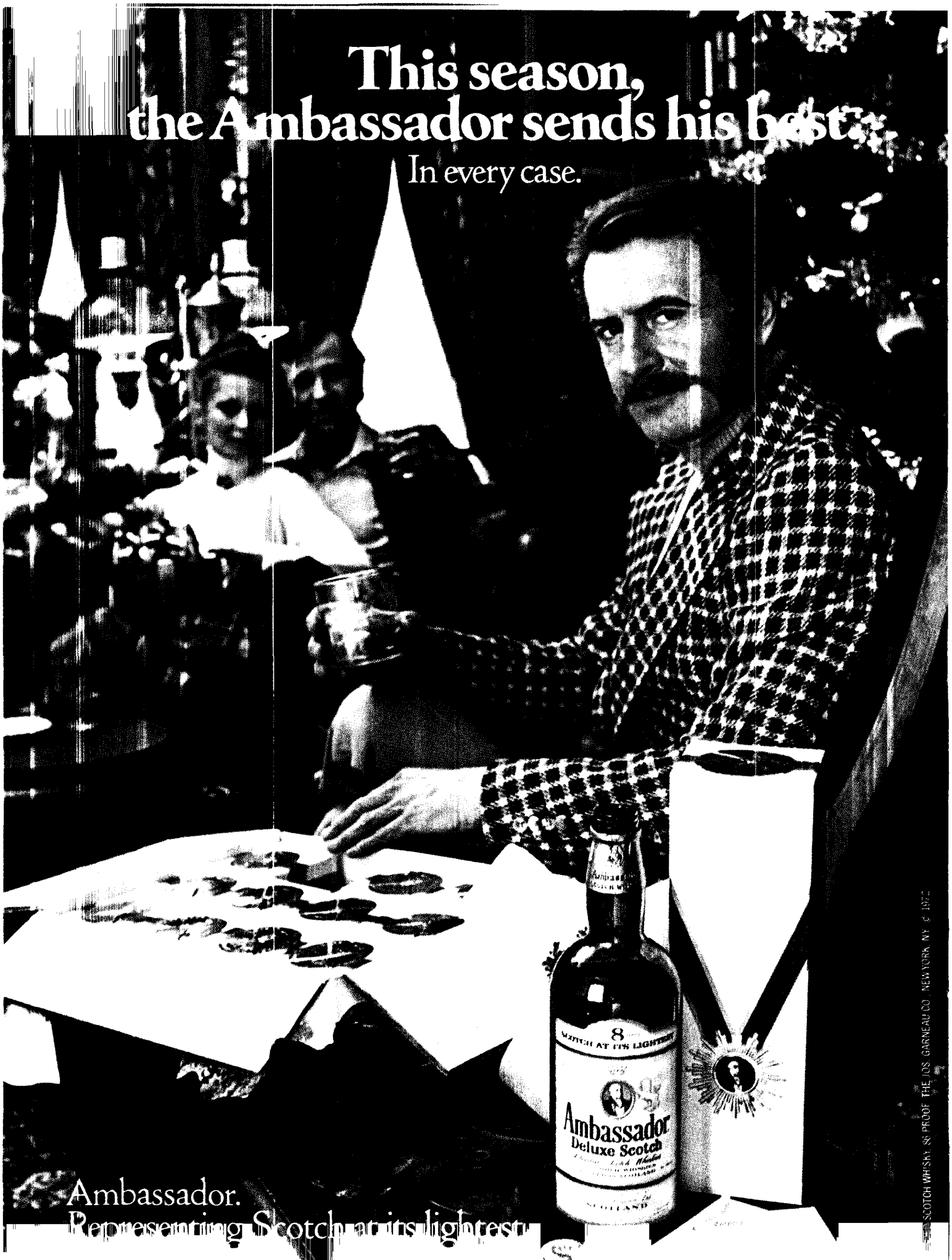
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and Jewish Responses: An Exchange," *Congress Bi-Weekly,* February 9, 1973.) Today, everyone agrees that Key 73 was a massive failure. Among Christians, "It seems to have produced nothing more than a giant yawn," according to the *United Methodist Reporter,* a supporter of the effort. Ironically, what little notoriety Key 73 achieved resulted from the misguided Jewish attacks. According to Dr. Theodore A. Raedeke, executive director of Key 73, these attacks helped their cause. . . .

It is important to understand, however, that the reason Key 73 presented no threat to Jewish interests is not because it would not succeed, but rather because it was never intended as "an organized missionary campaign directed at Jews," as Mr. Sklare inaccurately asserts.

The primary and overwhelming purpose of Key 73 was not the conversion of Jews, nor even proselytism as such, but rather a heightening of the religious consciousness of Christians by emphasizing the evangelical dimension of Christianity, i.e., the importance of belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus for individual salvation. Key 73 was marked by a broad ecumenism; it enjoyed the sponsorship of the large majority of Protestant groups, including most mainline denominations, as well as a large number of Catholic dioceses. This fact alone should suggest to any knowledgeable observer that proselytism could not have been a major factor, for otherwise Key 73 would have turned into a bloody internecine battle among its many sponsors.

Mr. Sklare is misinformed again when he writes that Jewish religious bodies—Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform—"were unanimous in condemning the development." While it is true that these bodies joined the major community-relations agencies in expressing concern about the impact that Key 73 might have on Jewish life, they did not condemn Key 73. In a policy statement issued by the Synagogue Council of America, they declared unanimously that the challenge of Key 73 "cannot be met by opposing efforts of the Christian community to advance its religious ideals." They added that "the real danger to Jewish survival stems not from the gains of other religious communities, but from the erosion of Jewish religious commitment."

Far more important than Mr. Sklare's misunderstanding of Key 73 are the issues raised by his treatment of the Christian conversionary impulse. The historical determination to counter Christian proselytism directed at Jews does not imply, as Mr. Sklare seems to take for granted, that all Jews are offended by a Christian theology that does not grant the legitimacy of the Jewish covenant. There are those who maintain that the demand that Christians recognize the validity of Judaism for Jews implicitly grants a Jewish legitimacy to Christian theology. Judaism constitutes a denial of the central Christian mystery and its notion of salvation. It cannot at one and the same time reject Christian theology while demanding that it be reformulated to accommodate the legitimacy of Judaism.

Furthermore, we tend to overlook the fact that the Christian conviction that Christianity is a fulfillment of Judaism parallels a traditional Jewish conviction that Judaism is a fulfillment of Chris-

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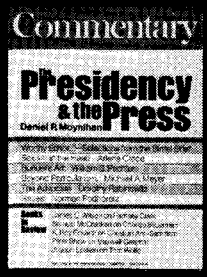

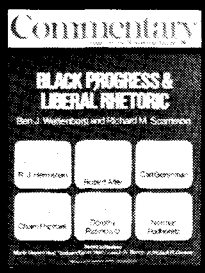

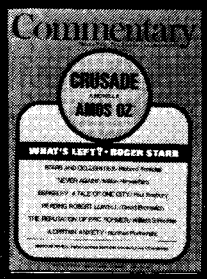

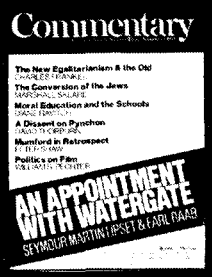
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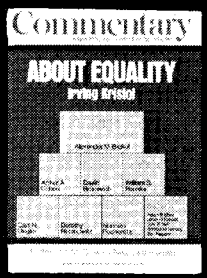

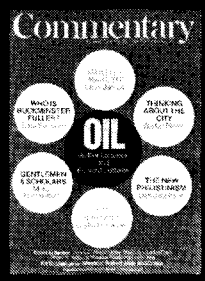

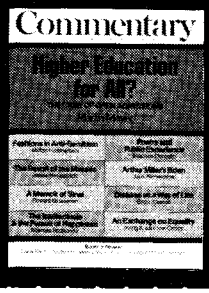

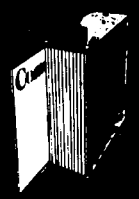

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tianity, ideologically if not chronologically, and that Christianity must ultimately give way to Judaism.

That religious faith is conducive to such abrasive theological differences will no doubt disturb those who prefer to think of religion as an admirable force for progress, democracy, and mental health. In this connection, Mr. Sklare's assertion that the persistence of the missionary movement is seen by American Jews as "imputing a status of inequality that is contrary to the American ideal" is most revealing. The proposition that theology should conform to "the American ideal" brings to mind the good-will bromides and the religious relativism that characterized the interfaith movement of the 50's, when the melting-pot metaphor reigned supreme. What the early interfaith activists had in common was the conviction that it is un-American to take religious faith so seriously as to allow it to make for any real differences.

We have come a long way since those days, and the melting-pot metaphor has given way to the notion of pluralism. Interestingly enough, the newest argument against missionary efforts is that they endanger American pluralism. It is a superficial argument, however, and it does not stand up under examination. Freedom of religion and of speech implies minimally that everyone has the right to propagate his views in the public marketplace of ideas, and to seek converts to his views —provided this is done by democratic means. *Religious* proselytising poses no more of a threat to pluralism than does *political* proselytising.

It is true, as Mr. Sklare notes, that Abraham Joshua Heschel sought to persuade Christians to abandon missionary efforts directed at Jews. He asked Christians to consider whether they would really prefer to live in a world in which there are no Jews. He insisted that he would not prefer to live in a world in which there were no Christians.

There is no doubt that Heschel spoke for many Jews, but, on this subject at least, he did not speak for all Jews. And while Heschel was one of the great Jewish theologians of modern times, his argument against conversion has more poetic beauty than theological force. For the Christian hope is

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indeed a world in which "there is neither Jew nor Gentile," neither Muslim nor Buddhist. Furthermore, Heschel argued that Christian missions are unnecessary only in the case of Jews. One must admit that there is a certain partisanship to a sensitivity which cannot bear to see a world without Jews, but can accommodate itself to a world without Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, etc.

It seems that even Heschel felt compelled to follow up his question to Christians by establishing a parallelism of Jewish sentiment about a world bereft of Christians. This underscores a very special danger that inevitably emerges when the question of the salvific status of Judaism in Christian theology, or of Christianity in Jewish theology, ceases to be an internal theological issue and becomes a subject of negotiations across faith lines. In such negotiations, each side expects comparable "concessions" from the other. While such give-and-take may make for good public relations, it makes for bad theology. Of course, I would readily take my chances with a Heschel. It is an entirely different matter, however, when secular Jewish organizations involve themselves in this area.

The role of community-relations agencies in interfaith activities is a highly problematic one for other reasons as well, although this is not the place to deal with this problem. Suffice it to say that the interreligious enterprise involves fundamental questions of faith, questions that should not be subject to the manipulations of community-relations specialists: there are areas of life that simply do not lend themselves to their assumptions.

This argument may be (and has been) challenged on the ground that there are many issues which religious organizations—primarily, though not exclusively, the Orthodox—refuse to discuss with Christians precisely because they involve questions of faith. By contrast, the community-relations organizations have no such inhibitions.

The obvious answer is that only those who take questions of faith seriously will insist that certain issues are too sensitive and too "theologically private" for interfaith discussion. Only those for whom questions of faith are ultimately trivial will say that there isn't a subject that cannot be programmed for the dialogue. The reticence of the Orthodox—however one may feel about it—is clearly the result of religious considerations. The complete openness of the secular agencies is clearly a function of their secularism.

Which brings me to my final point—the issue of secularism. Not the least of the damage that was done by ill-founded Jewish attacks on Key 73 is the reinforcement they provided for the already widely-held Christian impression that Jewish interest in Christianity is confined to the growth of liberal attitudes in it; and that if these attitudes foster a secularism that undermines Christian faith, Jews are not much concerned.

Even more distressing are the implications of this insensitivity to the onslaughts of secularism for the future of Jewish life. A measure of the irrelevance of the obsession with the conversionary aspect of Key 73 is the fact that for every Jew who converts to Christianity because of the persuasiveness—or the deceptiveness—of a Christian evangelist, there are probably at least a hundred who are lost to Judaism because of the indifference and hostility to religion that are bred by the pervasive secularism of modern life.

The most striking fact to emerge from Mr. Sklare's article is the utter failure of Christian missions to the Jews, even under the most propitious circumstances. His article is also a literate and sensitive evocation of traditional Jewish response to the threat of *shmad*. I think he would agree, however, that, given the realities of Jewish life today, we are badly served by the kind of obsessive preoccupation with Christian missionary intentions that has characterized the activities of some Jewish organizations in recent months.

(Rabbi) Henry Siegman
Synagogue Council of America
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

I certainly hope that no one connected with Key 73 had any intention of making "any significant breach in the wall between Church and State." On that point, Marshall Sklare and Commentary readers might be interested in the following statement, which was accepted by the American Baptist National Key 73 planning committee:

. . . We Baptists rejoice in the witness to religious freedom of our own particular tradition, affirming that faith cannot be forced and that persons should always be free to follow where they believe truth leads them. In our pluralistic nation we need constantly to emphasize the First Amendment to the Constitution, which states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." We claim freedom to witness to the truth and love of God as made known to us, always insisting on the rights of others to do the same.

In a zeal to testify to the faith that is the source of life and salvation to us, we often fall short in relating to those of other faiths with love and understanding. Tragically, this has all too often been true in our past and present contacts with Jews, with whom we have so much in common, biblically and historically, despite distinctive differences.

We respect and benefit from the continued witness by Jews to the one holy and transcendent God who continues his covenant with them, for the "gifts and call of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29).

The failure of the Christian churches to follow Christ fully and to live wholly in his spirit in our dealings with the Jews has led to distorted readings of New Testament passages, and has contributed to the sad history of anti-Semitism and to the immense tragedy of the Nazi Holocaust.

Our devotion to religious freedom and our respect for the rights of other religious communities are rooted in the life and work of Jesus Christ who invited and persuaded persons but did not coerce or take unfair advantage of them. We believe it is inappropriate for Christians to single out Jews as Jews (or indeed to single out any racial or ethnic group as such) for special evangelistic attention. . . .

Robert T. Handy
Union Theological Seminary
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . If, as Marshall Sklare correctly emphasizes, the Christian missionary movement to the Jews is not and never has been a significant factor in the defection of Jews from their faith, why devote ten pages of Commentary to beating a dead horse?

As a sixty-seven-year-old Christian who spent more than forty years in and around big-city journalism, who has traveled extensive-

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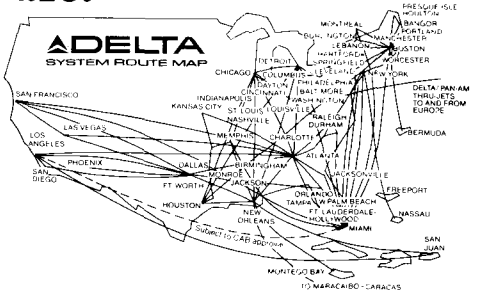

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ly throughout the world, I have known personally but one Jewish convert to Christianity, a rather unimpressive character who happened to be associated with some obscure Reformed Church mission. Among my fellow Christians, active and passive, not only do I not recall ever having heard the subject discussed, I am not even aware that any of them knew the movement existed. My hunch is that one way or the other, they couldn't care less.

For years, the Christian missionary movement has been in a general decline, most sects having difficulty manning their outposts. The consensus among those who think about it at all is that missionaries have killed more subjects than they have confirmed, a stigma hardly calculated to attract many young recruits except those few who are willing to prostitute their services for a free ride to some exotic strand.

But militating most potently, now as always, against any groundswell of Jewish defection to Christianity is the fundamental and unmitigated incompatibility of the faiths, a tradition of "theological enmity," as Arthur A. Cohen has called it *(The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition)*.

It seems to me that the best way for the Jews, or any other potential victims, to meet whatever vestigial threat of Christian conversion may persist, is to ignore it rather than to objectify with scholarly rehash an activity that never amounted to a hill of beans to begin with.

H. T. Rowe

Ridgewood, New Jersey

To the Editor of Commentary:

There seems to be an underlying feeling of regret in Marshall Sklare's article . . . that Jews are subject to missionary activity, some feeling that they oughtn't to be, that such activity isn't legitimate. As a practical matter, evangelical attempts can't be prevented, but equally important, why should they be? . . . Where opinions differ, people generally try to get one another to see things their own way, whether the issue is political, economic, social, scientific, or religious. Why should Jews expect to be exempt from this process? . . .

Robert Carlen

New York City

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To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . In the past, according to Marshall Sklare, missionary methods were crude, but now more sophisticated tools are being used and hundreds of young people are lost to the Jewish community every year. . . . The missionaries are certainly active: they go from door to door, they turn up on school campuses, they produce television shows, and sponsor "Hanukkah celebrations," to name just a few of their activities.

Even educated young Jewish people are not able to answer when they are bombarded with missionary propaganda and biblical quotations. And what does the Jewish community do? . . . At the beginning of Key 73, when some Jewish leaders tried to speak out, they were told they were overreacting. . . . According to Mr. Sklare, the best available publication is *The Missionary at the Door—Our Own Uniqueness,* prepared by Rabbi Benjamin Segal. Yet although I am interested in this subject I did not know of this publication. Jewish organizations have not . . . been active enough to send a booklet like this to every Jewish home. There is definitely more zeal among Christian fundamentalists. . . . Little wonder, then, that Mr. Sklare, at the end of his article, is apparently resigned to the fact that Key 73 and Christian evangelism will remain with us. But if every Jew, young and old, were well-informed and knew how to answer the missionaries, we would not have to worry, and the evangelists, as well as the "Hebrew-Christians," would give up.

Heinz Hartmann
Syracuse, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . I have no cause to disagree with the conclusions drawn by Marshall Sklare on the general consequences of Jewish missions. I do, however, wish to add that the arguments he uses to question this work are drawn from "liberal" sources, while much of the support for Jewish missions comes from fundamentalists who are dismissed by Mr. Sklare as anachronisms and potential threats to the accommodations made by those who espouse toleration and acceptance. I have argued elsewhere ("Fundamentalism, Prejudice, and Missions to the Jews," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology,* Volume 5, No. 1) that the American Board of Missions to the Jews, and other organizations like it, may in actuality be working in a parallel fashion to the more liberal religious ideologies, by preaching a toleration and understanding for Jews to a population relatively untouched by the liberal presence.

Of course Jews may view the work and the existence of these missions as questioning their legitimacy, even though they have been and remain notoriously unsuccessful. However, some attention ought to be given to the potential consequences of this work for those who are the strongest supporters of the Jewish mission enterprise. I think the . . . usual arguments among Jews about this work fail to note its impact on those religious outsiders, the fundamentalists, who are within the physical but not the value boundaries of a pluralist society.

Robert E. Blumstock
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

Marshall Sklare writes:

It is apparent from the last paragraph of Rabbi Siegman's letter that his quarrel is not with me but with what he terms "some Jewish organizations." He hesitates to name these organizations, but to those acquainted with Jewish communal affairs it is clear that he is seeking to combat the influence of the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League, and secondarily that of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

Rabbi Siegman would have the Synagogue Council of America displace the "professional Jewish ecumenists," as he terms the officials of the groups named above. I take no position on this matter—all that I would urge upon Rabbi Siegman is that he exercise restraint in statements on Jewish communal policy. Thus it is doubtful that he best serves the Jewish community at large by designating the old-line groups as "secular Jewish organizations," and by characterizing their work as "the manipulation of community-relations specialists."

As long as Jews live in a Gentile world, community-relations specialists will be needed; they perform a vitally important role on behalf of the minority groups for whom they speak. As a consequence, it would be well to seek to understand how community-relations specialists have arrived at the policies which they pursue. There may well be alternative policies which might

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be more advantageous for Jews. Such policies, however, should be argued on their merits rather than by pointing a finger at rival Jewish organizations and questioning their legitimacy.

Since Robert T. Handy is a distinguished scholar of American religion, the fact that he feels that the statement of the Baptists is important enough to deserve quotation assumes special significance. The statement does indeed reflect a sensitivity to the problem of Christian missionary efforts aimed at Jews—a sensitivity which was absent before the Holocaust.

H. T. Rowe underestimates the scope of the Christian missionary effort directed toward Jews. The effort has persisted since Colonial times and has constituted a significant aspect of the home-mission work of American Protestantism. The history of the effort is largely unknown; I could do little more than hint at its scope.

Although it is true that this effort has been less than successful, Mr. Rowe should realize that the reaction of Jewish leaders has not been determined either by the success or by the failure of Christian missions; they have been concerned, rather, with what such evangelism implies about the Jewish role in American society, as well as the status which it accords to Judaism. That is why the Jewish reaction is not simply an instance of oversensitivity, as Robert Carlen implies.

Teaching Values

To the Editor of Commentary:

Diane Ravitch spends some of her article ["Moral Education and the Schools," September] attacking my book, *Free the Children: Radical Reform and the Free School Movement*. I found *all* of her characterizations of my views to be wrong, but I don't feel that this could be usefully straightened out in a barbed-wit letters-column exchange. People who are interested can read the book and judge for themselves. However, on one point I do feel so strongly that I want to say something. In fact, my feelings were quite hurt. Mrs. Ravitch accuses me of advocating "indoctrination" and of standing for some vague grouping of fanatics of Left and Right, with Jehovah's Witnesses and such thrown in who want to brainwash their stu-

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Jacques Lipchitz was the last survivor of the grand avant-garde of modern art, the last link with the heroic cubist period of the School of Paris. A friend of Picasso, Braque, Modigliani, and Le Corbusier, his death in May of this year at the age of 82 brought to a close the era in which they effectively revised the twentieth-century image.

Yet if Jacques Lipchitz was one of the first to apply the principles of cubist form to sculpture—and if, as he said of himself, he was "always a cubist"—it is in another sense that he finally commanded international attention. Cubism had always been an art of heroic form rather than of heroic themes. Lipchitz, turning his attention to the grand subjects of mythology and the Bible, forged a style that could accommodate such material. In some ways he ceased to be a modern artist. Working within an emotional climate that recalled the great efforts of Michelangelo and Rodin, he created monumental works that transcended our own time. In so doing he set aside his youthful experiments in favor of an art that would be capable of sustaining his own mature passion and eloquence.

The central figure of Jacques Lipchitz' mythology was Prometheus—who stole fire from the gods and brought it to mankind. Zeus punished Prometheus by chaining him to Mt. Caucasus, where a vulture fed upon his liver until Heracles—with the consent of Zeus—interceded and set him free. For Lipchitz, Prometheus symbolized the triumph of light over darkness, of education over ignorance, of the effective struggle for liberation in the face of arbitrary punishment and hardship. His interest in the figure apparently traces to 1931; but, with the Hitlerian threat of 1933, Prometheus took on new significance for him. By 1936, the Prometheus he created for the Paris World's Fair was not only chainless but had triumphed over the vulture.

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dents and discourage any critical thinking.

I admit that this sounds corny, but I really do believe in free speech, in free schools as well as public schools, and I have always so stated and acted. Since Mrs. Ravitch quotes no words of mine to back up her very serious accusation, I would like to quote a paragraph which addresses the issue directly.

Describing a seminar I taught on political affairs, I commented:

> So far as influencing young people toward a particular point of view, a teacher can only be as honest as possible: that is, he can be a good teacher, raise his own doubts, explain how he got to where he is, try to bring out the plausibility of differing views, but without expressing some phony methodological neutrality aimed at preventing the young people from figuring out what he really believes. (This, of course, makes it impossible to take account of the teacher's bias and leads them toward a false conception of objectivity.)

Readers may choose to agree with Mrs. Ravitch that I represent some kind of fanatic ideologist, but that's what I wrote and that's what I believe.

ALLEN GRAUBARD
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations for a discussion of the much neglected subject of "Moral Education and the Schools." Diane Ravitch's article laudably urges that the schools do a better job of encouraging rationality and justice in human behavior. She wisely reminds us that "in order to teach justice, a school must itself be just." Perhaps the ravages of Watergate will get educators and the public to turn more attention to the taboo subject of moral values in the schools, touchy though it is, and if so I hope it will be on the basis of the sound precepts put forth in Mrs. Ravitch's article.

But Mrs. Ravitch, sadly, does not set a very good example of her own precepts. Just as schools should be just in order to teach justice, so should articles about fairness and rationality make a little more effort to be fair and rational. There is no need for her to create grotesquely distorted straw men in order to support her own very valid position on moral

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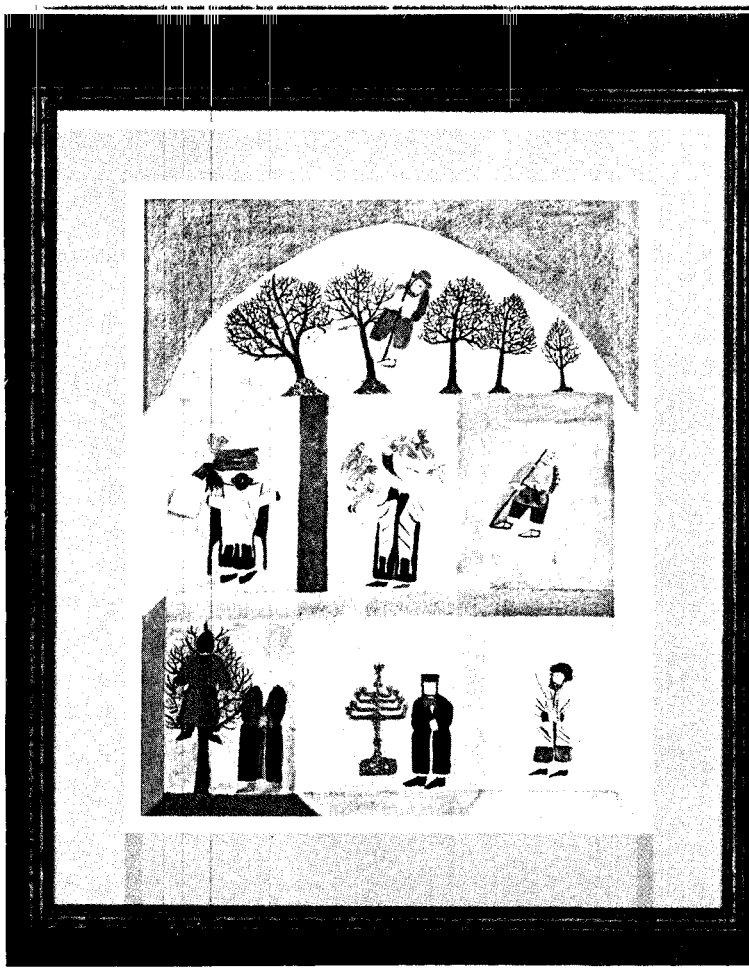

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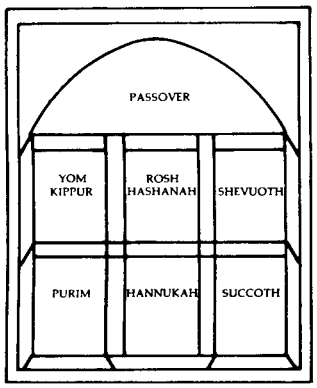

THE HOLIDAYS is typical of Harry Lieberman's joyous treatment of religious themes as he charmingly crowds a lifetime into a single picture, vibrant with color. Naive yet sophisticated, the overall effect can be likened to a Hasidic combination of biblical literalness and inspired symbolism. A faint nostalgia for the teachings of childhood and its lost innocence permeates the entire group despite its paradoxical appearance of stained glass panels in a wood frame.

Harry Lieberman's own life is as fascinating as his paintings, which win high critical praise wherever they are shown. Although he started his painting career late (at the age of 78) and as a primitive, there is nothing amateurish about his work. In fact, the richness of the color and detail in his interpretations of Biblical themes imbue them with great vitality and warmth.

Born in a typical *shtetl*, Gnieveshev, pop. 500, near Warsaw, nephew of the village Rabbi, Harry Lieberman followed the Hasidic Sect of Mystic Ecstasy founded by the Baal-Shem-Tov. He came to this country in 1906 and worked at first as a clothing cutter on the lower East Side of New York. The confectionary business beckoned next, and the one he and his wife started grew and prospered until he retired to Great Neck, New York, in 1950. There his primary interest was chess but, when his chess partner fell ill—Harry Lieberman turned to painting.

Now in his nineties, he is still exhibiting his work in both one-man and group exhibitions; and it is collected both here and abroad by museums, individuals, and institutions.

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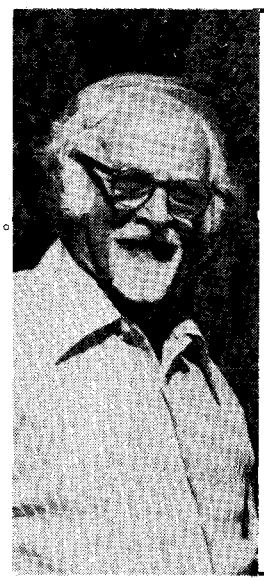

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education in the schools. And Mrs. Ravitch does just that, with some very bizarre assumptions about the positions of others—people she obviously regards as much less wise then herself. To suggest that "'romantics' like A. S. Neill" and Catholics think that public schools "should teach no values" seems so far off base as to taint the rationality of the article itself.

And where does Mrs. Ravitch get the idea that "almost all critics are agreed that we should lower, not raise, our expectations of what schools can do"? Which critics does she have in mind? As one who often criticizes our present educational system myself (I hope always constructively), I have become rather sensitive to—and annoyed by—commentators who grossly distort the position of "the critics" in order to make their own points. Such deluding tactics do not promote rational discussion.

How much better it would be if Mrs. Ravitch and COMMENTARY made their frequently worthy contributions to educational thinking in this country without feeling the need to attack and label those who do not share their views.

DAVID SEELEY
Public Education Association
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Diane Ravitch maintains there is a way to teach moral values effectively in our schools that avoids indoctrination and then she proceeds to indoctrinate us in that method.

It seems to me that the author's suggestions about the source of morals and the method of teaching them are what the total educational enterprise has been trying to do since 1900 A.D. (After Dewey), and judging from the evidence of moral decay in our society, they (the schools) have been eminently successful.

HAROLD J. DEAN
Board of Education
Alma, Michigan

DIANE RAVITCH writes:

I do believe that Allen Graubard believes in free speech; I never doubted it. I am also convinced by his writing that what he calls his "highly politicized outlook" provides the ideological basis for a highly politicized schooling process. I could have mentioned the statement on page 248: ". . . If you are against the way the dominant institutions work, if you want social justice and a humane society, then you are political and your educational task is set." Or on p. 260: "My firm view is that attempts at truly humanizing the public schools must run up against the fundamental social realities—the sickness of American society." It was from p. 260 that I cited his statement that "many free-school people balk at the idea of what they call 'politicizing.'" Or again, on pp. 269-70, where he writes: "Some people oppose the political perspective I have supported because, as noted earlier, they feel that partisan politics are inappropriate to free schools."

The quotation in Mr. Graubard's letter is taken from his book, where he reflects on his teaching of a two-session seminar for high-school students on the American bombing of Cambodia. Despite the fact that Mr. Graubard says that he personally gave "a sophisticated defense of the United States involvement in Indochina," he also demonstrates from his account of the readings he offered and the statements he made that only one side in the conflict was right and was acting on behalf of humanity and oppressed peoples. He used an Orwell essay pointing up the analogy between the "Thieu-Ky interests" and "Franco, the generals, the fascists, the rich landowners and churchmen" of the Spanish civil war, and a Dwight Macdonald essay on people's responsibility for war crimes (concentration camps and atom-bombing), which flowed naturally into a reading on My Lai. Mr. Graubard honestly believes that he presented both sides. Yet I don't think that any student of that seminar was equipped with the critical tools to disagree, or provided with a classroom climate in which dissidence (in this instance, support for American policy in Indochina) would be seen as anything but an apology for fascists and warmongers. A teacher doesn't have to hide his own views and effect a "phony methodological neutrality." But he can say: "This is what I believe. I think I'm right, but I could be wrong."

David Seeley might read A. S. Neill's *Summerhill* for a substantiation of my point. Neill wrote, for example: "My view is that a child is innately wise and realistic. If left to himself without adult suggestion of any kind, he will develop as far as he is capable of developing." If Mr. Seeley would read any of the standard works on the development of parochial schooling (such as Vincent Peter Lannie's *Public Money and Parochial Education*), he would learn that these schools were founded as a refuge from the dominant values of the public school. I should also point out to Mr. Seeley that when I wrote about the critics, I was referring to people who are generally regarded as significant critics of American education, like Christopher Jencks, Carl Bereiter, and James Coleman, and not, I fear, to Mr. Seeley; his concern about being "attacked and labeled" is entirely groundless. My point in its context, as was clear from the sentence immediately following ("True, schooling does not guarantee success, but lack of schooling does appear to guarantee lack of success"), was specifically directed at the gloom that followed on the heels of Jencks's widely-discussed *Inequality,* which seconded many of the Coleman data on the limited effects of schooling.

Harold J. Dean seems to want the schools (and society) to return to the ostensibly halcyon days of 1900, when moral dictates were certain. Those were also the days when our society unblinkingly accepted legalized racism, imperialistic ventures, denial of suffrage to more than half the adult population, and grinding urban poverty (unrelieved by public welfare). I think a good case can be made that, for all our present troubles, our moral sensitivity as a society is higher today than it was in 1900, and it may be that we owe a greater debt of gratitude to John Dewey than we know.

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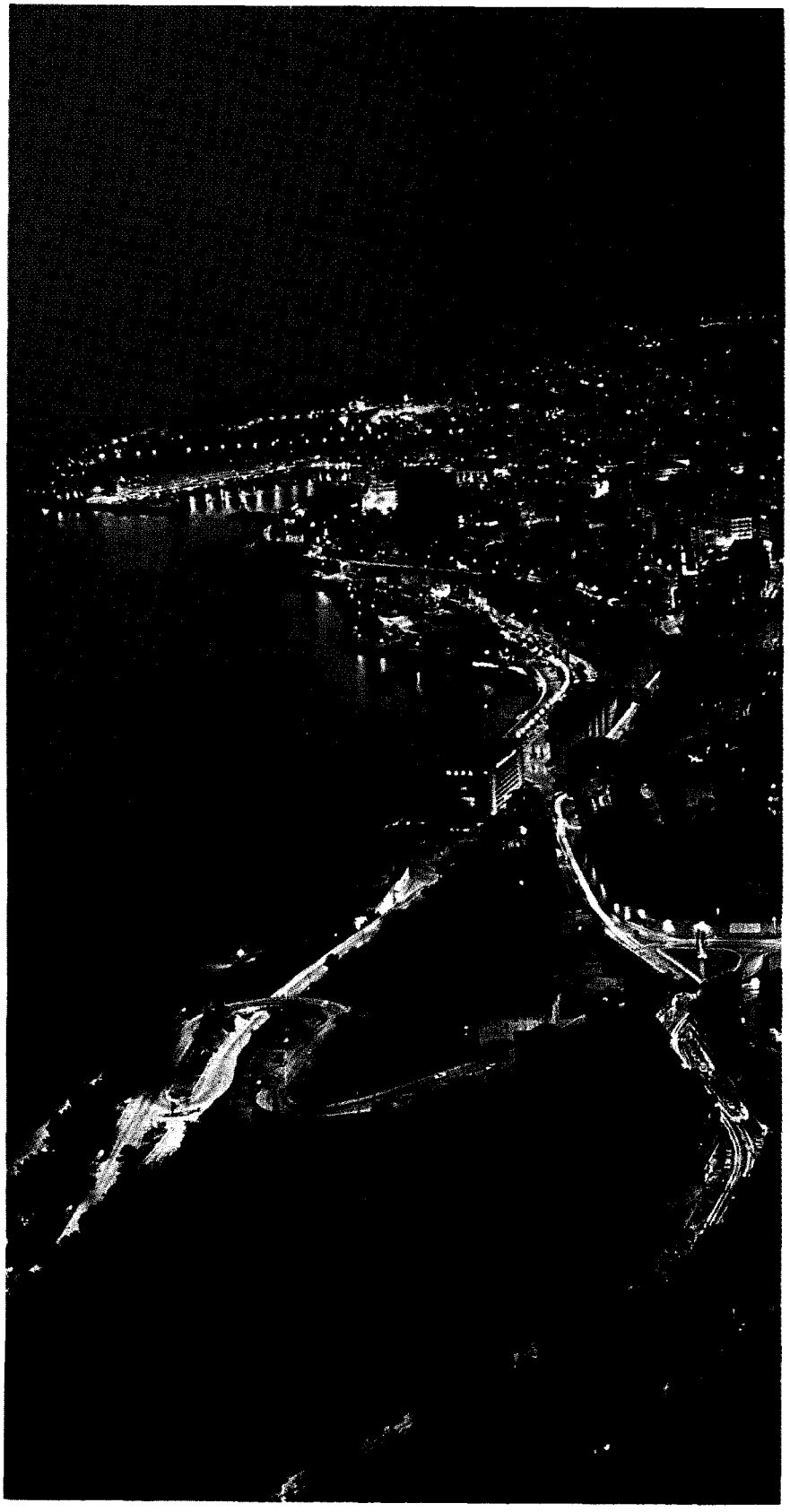

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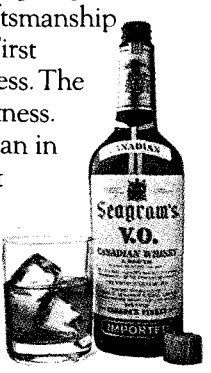

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From 1967 to 1973

The Arab-Israeli Wars

Theodore Draper

EVERY Arab-Israeli war has been haunted by the previous one. In the end, each of these wars—1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973—may be thought of as extended battles in a long war. For this reason, a fuller understanding of one can contribute much to a fuller understanding of all. We are still too close to the war of 1973 to know nearly enough about its derivation and ramifications, but we now know a great deal more about the war of 1967—a great deal that casts some light on the present war and that has not been dealt with satisfactorily in the existing literature on the subject.

The ostensible Arab *casus belli* of 1973 was the recovery of the "occupied territories" taken over by Israel in 1967. In 1967, an ostensible *casus belli* was a different kind of "occupied territory" —that held by the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) on the Egyptian-Israeli border in the Sinai region as a result of the war of 1956. Until 1967, "occupied territory" in the Arab view meant the land which actually made up the State of Israel. In effect, the very existence of Israel was regarded by the Arabs as an "aggression." The Egyptian leader in 1967, President Gamal Abdel Nasser, stated the proposition bluntly: "Israel's existence in itself is an aggression" (May 28, 1967).* After 1967, Arab policy, or at least propaganda, shifted its ground; "occupied territory" came to mean the land won by Israel in 1967 and "aggression" the way the war came about. From war to war, the Arabs have sought to push back to the *status quo ante* in order to unravel the entire fabric of Arab-Israeli history. In 1973, they wanted to go back to 1967; in 1967, to 1956; and all the time to 1948, before the State of Israel was born. For this reason, the ostensible locus of the "occupied territory" has changed but its political significance or implication has not.

The term, "Israeli aggression," as applied to the 1967 war, became a banner, a war cry, an incantation, without which an Arab politician could hardly make a speech or an Arab diplomat compose a UN resolution. This slogan seemed necessary to give the Arabs a sense of outraged innocence, moral superiority, and unrestricted claim on the rest of the world. If the Israelis were really guilty of an unprovoked aggression in 1967, who could rightfully deny the Arabs their cries for simple justice or even fiery revenge? In those two words, "Israeli aggression," the Arabs put their entire moral and political case against Israel, as if the charge were self-evidently true; and, if true, nothing more needed to be said to condemn Israel before world public opinion.

How true is it? The answer should tell us much about one of the deepest manifestations of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It should also teach us something about the peculiar nature of political myths, especially how they arise after some wars to cover up the true reasons for defeat. This Arab myth is not the first of its kind; the German "stab-in-the-back" myth after World War I was very similar in purpose and fabrication. The legend of war guilt haunted Germany for years and contributed heavily to Hitler's victory in 1933. If the same legend lasts that long in the Arab world, the price may be equally high.

II

FIRST, let us recall the main events leading up to the 1967 war. Memories have dimmed, and it is necessary to hold a few key dates in mind before we go on to inquire what the Arab leaders thought they were doing —and why.

In most accounts, the 1967 crisis began to come to a head on April 7, 1967, when Syrians and Israelis fought a one-day battle in the air and on the ground. It was the most violent flare-up since 1956. Nasser later claimed that this incident, followed by allegedly threatening anti-Syrian remarks by Israeli leaders, had precipitated his subsequent moves.

The first fatal military move came five weeks

THEODORE DRAPER is the author of *Israel and World Politics*, published by Viking in 1968. He has just completed a five-year term at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. Some of the research for this article was done by Boaz Shoshan, a graduate student at Princeton University.

* The full text of Nasser's statements during the 1967 crisis period is given in the appendices to my book, *Israel and World Politics*. These translations, made in Washington at the time, have been checked with the Arabic original and some minor revisions have been made here. The dates in parentheses are the dates of delivery.

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later, on May 14, with the massing of large-scale Egyptian troops in the Sinai region bordering Israel. This move was supposedly designed to relieve the purported Israeli pressure on Syria.

Two days later, on May 16, Egypt demanded the withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF)—which was actually no "force" at all. The UNEF was merely a conglomeration of no more than 3,400 men from seven countries, over half Indian and Yugoslav, of whom about 1,800 policed 295 miles along the Egypt-Israel border and the Gaza Strip. It merely served as a buffer between the two sides, to keep them apart by its presence, not to "enforce" the peace.

Later, a controversy arose whether Nasser had intended to demand the complete or only the partial withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping mission. If complete, the Egyptian takeover necessarily included the UN observation post at Sharm el-Sheikh, commanding the Straits of Tiran at the entrance of the Gulf of Aqaba. Sharm el-Sheikh was a critical piece in this deadly game because, as long ago as 1957, the then Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, had warned Egypt not to "block our historic and legal passage into the Gulf of Aqaba" if it wished to avoid another war. For ten years, this warning—plus the understanding that the United States stood behind it—had kept open the passage through the Gulf of Aqaba.

Then, on May 22, Nasser announced the closure of the Straits of Tiran, thereby blockading the port of Eilat, Israel's only outlet to the Red Sea. This act was the immediate *casus belli* of the war.

The proximate, though of course not the deeper, causes of the war were, then, the unilateral expulsion of the UNEF and the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba. Both these moves assumed their overriding significance for Egypt and Israel because they represented a return to the 1956 war's *status quo ante*. As Nasser took pains to make clear, these actions were not ends in themselves; they were intended to begin the unraveling process. Or, as he put it: "If we were able to restore conditions to what they were before 1956, God will surely help and urge us to restore the situation to what it was in 1948" (May 29, 1967).

By May 22, then, Egypt had made its moves. The next two weeks were occupied with diplomatic maneuvers aimed at getting Egypt to reopen the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping or at deterring Israel from doing anything about it. When all such efforts failed, Israel struck on June 5. Its spectacular victory, ending in occupation of Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian territory, set the stage for the war of 1973.

The questions that arise and that have been dealt with most unsatisfactorily in the existing literature on the Arab-Israeli conflict are:

When did the Egyptians begin to think of making precisely those moves which led to the outbreak on June 5?

What were the calculations and motivations behind Egyptian policy in this period?

Who was chiefly responsible for the illusions and miscalculations which brought on the war?

In the light of what we now know, how meaningful is the legend of "Israeli aggression"?

If this legend has little to commend it historically, why has it persisted so tenaciously and what purpose has it served?

What are the larger implications of this experience for a better understanding of both the past and future of the Arab-Israeli conflict?

One of the main obstacles to an understanding of the 1967 war may be called the "Syrian myth." It alleged that Nasser was impelled to expel the UN mission, take over Sharm el-Sheikh, and close the Straits of Tiran because the Israelis were going to invade Syria.

Nasser himself was the chief author of this story. He repeatedly sought to give the impression that he thought of taking these actions when he learned that Syria was endangered.

Here is how Nasser put it the first time:

> On May 13 we received accurate information that Israel was concentrating on the Syrian border huge armed forces of about 11 to 13 brigades. These forces were divided into two fronts, one south of Tiberias and the other north of Tiberias.
>
> The decision made by Israel at this time was to carry out an aggression against Syria on May 17. On May 14 we took measures, discussed this matter, and contacted our Syrian brothers (May 22, 1967).

Here is Nasser a second time:

> The circumstances in which we requested the withdrawal of UNEF are also known to all of you. Syria was threatened. There was a plan to invade Syria (May 28, 1967).

And a third time after the war:

> We all know how the Middle East crisis began in the first half of last May; there was an enemy plan to invade Syria . . .(June 9, 1967).

A fourth time:

> We all know that this crisis began with Israel's attempt to invade Syria (July 23, 1967).

And a fifth time:

> We received information about the Israeli mobilization against Syria. That is why we sent forces into the Sinai to deter them (interview in *Look*, March 19, 1968).

This is the rationale for Nasser's actions that has found its way into book after book and article after article. The most imaginative version may be found in the biography of Nasser by Anthony Nutting, whose book might make a good text for a seminar on historical mythomania. Nutting claims that Israel deliberately lured Nasser

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into battle by means of calculated leaks and fictitious radio messages designed to convince the Russians, who in turn were to convince the Egyptians that a major Israeli assault on Syria was imminent. Thus Nasser's movement of Egyptian troops into the Sinai and his expulsion of the UN peacekeeping forces were all part of an "Israeli plan" or "trap."*

The whole elaborate structure of the myth of "Israeli aggression" in 1967 was based, then, on two interrelated points: Israel's alleged threat to Syria in mid-May, after which Nasser first thought of his counter-moves in the Sinai and the Gulf of Aqaba.

All this might best be described as a "cover story." And, like other "cover stories" of the past few years, it came apart inadvertently, and in Egypt itself. A crucial portion of the real story has been available for over five years, but relatively little use has been made of it. What actually happened is still significant for its bearing on the present course of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

WHEN the 1967 war ended, Nasser did not accept full responsibility for the Egyptian defeat. Instead, he shifted the blame onto the Egyptian military leaders, who, of course, fully deserved his wrath. After his top military leader, Field Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer, committed suicide in September 1967, Nasser staged a trial in February the following year of numerous officers and the former Minister of Defense, Shams Badran, who were accused of plotting to overthrow his regime. Badran, the chief defendant, insisted on talking about how the war had come about, despite efforts by the court to restrict his testimony to the postwar plot. Badran's testimony has never been disputed, and without it, the genesis of the war cannot be fully understood.†

In December 1966, or January 1967, Badran related, he, Field Marshal Amer, and the Chief of Intelligence, Salah Nasr, made a trip to Pakistan. While they were there, the Defense Council of the Arab League met in Cairo.** At this time, it is necessary to recall, the main Egyptian preoccupation was not Syria; it was Jordan. In the propaganda war then raging among the Arab nations, Egypt attacked Hussein as a reactionary monarch afraid to fight Israel, and Jordan retorted that Nasser was "hiding behind the skirts of UNEF" in order to avoid a confrontation. A Jordanian Prime Minister, Wasfi Tell, went so far as to charge that Nasser had made a secret agreement with Israel in 1957 to keep the UNEF in the Sinai area in order to give Egypt an alibi for staying out of the Palestine imbroglio. In this way, the UNEF was drawn into an internecine Arab struggle before the crisis of 1967 flared up.

Badran continued:

> So the idea occurred to the Field Marshal [Amer] that we ought to do something about it in order to forestall the campaign [of the reactionary Arab states]. So he said: Send a message to the President [Nasser], explaining our proposal—that we should remove the UNEF and occupy Sharm el-Sheikh, and that we have [army] units which are ready [for this purpose].

Nasser failed to reply because, Badran said, he was not yet convinced that the idea was a good one. Badran, however, pointed out to Amer that withdrawal of the UNEF from Sharm el-Sheikh would result in war. Amer replied that he wanted to occupy Sharm el-Sheikh only, without closing the Gulf of Aqaba, in order to deprive Egypt's enemies in the Arab world of a pretext for their hostile propaganda. Badran was skeptical. He thought that the anti-Egyptian propaganda would intensify if the Gulf were not closed and that Amer's proposal was merely "half a solution."

Let us stop here for a moment. We are now at the origin of the idea that led to the moves which precipitated the 1967 war. In December 1966, Field Marshal Amer was not concerned with alleged Israeli troop concentrations on the Syrian border or purported Israeli threats to invade Syria. He was motivated by an internecine Arab struggle in which Israel was used by each side as a weapon of propaganda against the other. In effect, Amer had given birth to an idea whose time had not yet come—but it was not long in coming.

The "Syrian myth" was necessary to conceal the fact that the idea of expelling the UNEF and taking over Sharm el-Sheikh had been in the air in Egyptian ruling circles ever since December 1966. Nasser himself made what seemed to be puzzling, contradictory statements on how the takeover of Sharm el-Sheikh and the alleged Israeli threat to Syria were connected. On one occasion he denied that Egypt had had any thought of war before May 13, 1967, the day he had allegedly learned of the Israeli threat, because "we did not imagine that Israel would dare to attack any Arab country" (May 22, 1967). Four days later, he told a totally different story which tied in more closely with Badran's testimony. This time he said that he knew taking over Sharm el-Sheikh meant a general war with Israel. Then he added that he had been authorized "to implement it [the Sharm el-Sheikh plan] at the right time; and the right time came with Israel's threats against Syria" (May 26, 1967).

* Anthony Nutting, *Nasser*, Dutton, 1972, pp. 397-98.

† Badran testified on February 24, 1968, and a verbatim report appeared in the Cairo paper, *al-Ahram*, the next day. The testimony came too late for my book, *Israel and World Politics*. In the literature on the subject, only Nadav Safran seems to have used it beyond a mere reference, and he was barely able to insert four last-minute footnotes based on the testimony as his book, *From War to War*, went to press.

** The visit to Pakistan actually took place December 5-12, 1966, and the meeting of the Arab League's Supreme Council occurred December 7-11, 1966.

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By the time Nasser made his second statement, he had closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping, a step which had not been contemplated in Field Marshal Amer's original idea for the very reason that it was tantamount to bringing on a war with Israel. Nasser had taken over Amer's essential idea, but in a different form and for a different purpose. Sharm el-Sheikh now became symbolic of closing the Gulf of Aqaba to Israel instead of merely getting rid of the UNEF. And the purpose was no longer primarily to counter Jordanian propaganda; it was to challenge Israel to a direct confrontation.

Nasser later attributed his belief in an Israeli attack to Syrian and Soviet intelligence sources. Even if they were right, the attack, according to Nasser himself, should have taken place on May 17. When it did not, he presumably should have been satisfied that his military buildup in the Sinai had achieved its purpose. Nevertheless, it was after May 17 that Nasser made his most belligerent moves—occupation of Sharm el-Sheikh on the 18th and closure of the Straits of Tiran on the 22nd. Something happened during those days which hardened Nasser's resolve to transform Amer's original idea into a more far-reaching and complex scheme for taking on Israel.*

The inner story of what took place in Egypt's top command has not yet been fully told, and it still casts light on the fundamental considerations which have guided Egyptian policy.

III

So far, I have tried to get rid of an obstacle that stands in the way of understanding this Arab-Israeli conflict—the "Syrian cover story." Now I have come to what I consider to be the most important and most fascinating aspect of the entire sequence of events. Again, the key to Egyptian strategy may be found in former Defense Minister Badran's testimony.

A tip-off to what really happened first came from Nasser's chief journalistic confidant and mouthpiece, Muhammad Hassanein Heykal, editor of *al-Ahram*, in a series of post-mortem articles in October 1967. Heykal admitted that the Egyptians had ostensibly achieved their objective when the Israelis did not attack Syria on May 17 and that the Egyptian forces in the Sinai should have fallen back to "defensive positions." But he then let slip the reason why they failed to do so: "Some of us were dazzled by the spectacle of the force we moved into Sinai between May 15 and May 20" (*al-Ahram*, October 22, 1967).

Nasser had previously hinted at the same mood: "We are ready today," he had boasted (May 26, 1967). To visitors before the war, he had expressed confidence that his air force was more than a match for Israel's. He refused to listen to advisers who had warned him in advance that he was taking too great a risk.†

Badran told much more of the inside story. The Egyptian officers had been itching for a fight. Egyptian intelligence was confident that Egypt was superior in tanks, artillery, and air force. When Field Marshal Amer and Badran made a tour of inspection in the Sinai they were impressed by those "who were agitated and excited because they wanted to start operations." After Nasser spoke at an Egyptian air base in the Sinai on May 22 without actually declaring war, the officers were so disappointed that Amer felt a rising tension between Nasser and the officers. To calm them, Amer told them privately: "Don't worry, boys, you'll fight."

Meanwhile, a tactical dispute broke out in the Egyptian high command. The air force commander, General Sidqi Mahmud, wanted Egypt to strike first, a position with which Field Marshal Amer at first agreed. Nasser, who for his own reasons preferred to get the Israelis to make the first strike, soon won over the Field Marshal. The decisive reason for Nasser and Amer was that they thought an Egyptian first strike risked getting the United States into the war, while an Israeli first strike was calculated to keep the United States out. Badran related this exchange between Mahmud and Amer:

> Sidqi Mahmud objected and said: "I cannot accept an abortive operation because, for my part, it will paralyze me [i.e., the air force]." So the Field Marshal asked him: "Would you like to mount the first strike and face America or prefer to receive the first strike and face Israel only?" Sidqi Mahmud said: "All right, I agree." The Field Marshal asked him what the estimated losses would be. He [Mahmud] answered: "20 per cent."

The Egyptian decision to forgo a first strike was a deliberate one. It was not based on any intention to avoid war because the Egyptians believed and knew that they had taken measures which made war inevitable. The Egyptians took a cold-blooded calculated risk because they were so sure of coming victory. This aspect of the Egyptian plan helps to explain why Nasser and Heykal

* According to a UPI report from Cairo of February 24, 1968, Badran testified that the Egyptian Chief of Staff, General Muhammad Fawzi, had been sent to Syria on May 14, 1967, to check on the Syrian and Soviet reports of Israeli forces massing on the Syrian border. Fawzi found that the reports were unfounded and said that the Soviets "must have been having hallucinations." The same version of this portion of Badran's testimony appears in Safran's book (pp. 274-75) and in the *Middle East Record, 1967* (p. 191), both of which attribute it to *al-Ahram* of February 25, 1968. A search of the paper of that date in the copy at the Library of Congress has failed to locate and verify this passage. Conceivably, it may have appeared in a different edition of the same date and was eliminated from the Library of Congress's edition. If it should be confirmed, it would show even more emphatically that everything the Egyptians did after May 14 had nothing to do with the ostensible Israeli provocation of Syria.

† Nutting, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

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tried so hard to goad the Israelis into making war.

"The Jews threaten war," said Nasser. "We tell them: 'You are welcome, we are ready for war'" (May 22, 1967). Six days later: "Today we are alone face to face with Israel, and if Israel wants war I would say it again, 'welcome'" (May 28, 1967). The following day: "We are now ready to confront Israel" (May 29, 1967). Heykal left nothing to the imagination: "Let Israel begin! Let our second blow then be ready! Let it be a knockout!" (*al-Ahram,* May 26, 1967).

At the time these words seemed like vain boasting. They were more. The Israeli strike was an integral part of the Egyptian war plan. Nasser closely calculated the risks of war, took those which were sure to bring the Israelis in, and—until it was too late—calmly watched as his plans unfolded.

When he first sent Egyptian troops into Sinai on May 14, Nasser said that he had estimated the possibility of war at only 20 per cent. On May 22, when he decided to close the Gulf of Aqaba, Nasser changed it to 50 per cent. A few days later, he raised the figure to 80 per cent (July 23, 1967). And on May 28, after the return of Badran from Moscow, where he had gone to confer with the Soviet leaders a last time before the showdown, Badran testified that Nasser had put the chances of war at 100 per cent. Yet a day later, Nasser proclaimed: "Preparations have already been made. We are now ready to confront Israel" (May 29, 1967). The fatalism of the Egyptians on the outbreak of war was, by their own admission, complete a week before it broke out.

Moreover, Nasser even claimed to have known the date of the Israeli attack. He later declared that he had told a meeting of the Egyptian high command on June 2 that "I expect the aggression would take place on June 5 and that the first blow would be directed against our air force" (July 23, 1967). According to Badran's tantalizing testimony on this point, Nasser's source of information was American. We also know from the memoirs of the then Jordanian Prime Minister, Sa'd Jum'ah, that Hussein told Nasser on May 30 that he had had information from numerous sources, some of them foreign, that Israel was going to attack the Egyptian airfields by surprise on June 5 or 6.*

IN SHORT, Nasser's war plan called for goading the Israelis to attack first. He was totally mobilized and prepared. He knew the date. Curiously, Nasser was telling the truth when he assured an American journalist after the war: "It was not at all in our plans to attack Israel. I promise you, we had no plans for this" (Arnaud de Borchgrave, *Newsweek,* February 10, 1969). He also told a French correspondent that he "did not want to begin a war in 1967" (Eric Rouleau, *Le Monde,* February 19, 1970). What he failed to say and by that time was anxious to conceal was that it was in his plans for Israel to attack, that he wanted it to appear that Israel had started the war, and that he had done exactly what he knew was necessary to achieve this objective.

Nasser's biographers have found it exceedingly awkward to face this inconvenient fact. Anthony Nutting portrays a Nasser so mindless of what he was doing that he could bring himself to believe that the Israelis would not fight a war alone and that, after Egyptian troops advanced to the Israeli frontier, "the matter would end there." The truth is that Nasser's entire strategy was calculated on making the Israelis fight alone, and that he repeatedly told his colleagues in the week before the war that the matter would not end there. Jean Lacouture has so little understanding of his subject that he assures his readers that Nasser "expected that Israel would passively submit to the Tiran blockade."† The evidence is overwhelming that Nasser understood how much the Israelis could take "passively" far better than that. Robert Stephens, a British journalist, blithely considers it "unlikely" that Nasser "was simply concerned to lure Israel into a first strike so that he could overwhelm her."** This is exactly what Nasser himself intimated more than once, what one as close to him as Heykal unquestionably implied before the war, and what Nasser's Defense Minister, Shams Badran, who was certainly in a position to know, spelled out in the most circumstantial detail after the war.

Even Lucius D. Battle, the U.S. Ambassador in Cairo until early in 1967 and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs during the war crisis, seems to have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. He recently offered the opinion that "Nasser thought there would be someone to pull the Arabs and Israelis apart—before a military debacle could befall him but after a political victory had restored his waning image. Certainly he knew he could not win" (New York *Times Magazine,* October 21, 1973). If, as we know from Nasser and Badran, Nasser told his generals that war was 80 per cent and then 100 per cent certain at a time when "he knew he could not win," he was a monster of irresponsibility and deceitfulness. Nasser was actually a man who had always calculated his chances carefully and had previously abstained from forcing a showdown with the Israelis because, as he had put it in 1965, he wanted the Arabs to be fully prepared in order "to determine the battle." If he decided to determine the battle in 1967, it was because he thought the Arabs were sufficiently prepared. There is more truth in the idea that Nasser would have wanted someone to save him before suffering a military debacle, but

* Sa'd Jum'ah, *al-Mu'amara wa ma'rakat al-masir* ("The Conspiracy and the Battle of Destiny"), in Arabic (Beirut), 1968, p. 176.

† *Nasser,* Knopf, 1973, p. 301.

** *Nasser,* Allen Lane (London), 1971, p. 482.

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this is not the same thing as saying that he expected to suffer a military debacle. If this is what Mr. Battle still thinks in 1973, one shudders at the advice he was giving in 1967.

IV

BEFORE turning to the implications of 1967 for 1973, it remains to inquire into the motivation of Nasser's war policy as a clue to that of his successor.

On the Arab side, 1956 haunted 1967. The lesson of 1956, for Nasser, was that Egypt had been saved and his reputation enhanced because Egypt had appeared to be the victim of an Israeli-French-British attack. The Suez adventure was Britain's last gasp as a great power willing or able to make its influence felt in the Middle East or elsewhere, and by 1967, French policy toward Israel had turned from collaboration to hostility. There remained only the United States for Nasser to worry about—when he was not worrying about Israel.

The isolation of Israel, then, was a precondition for Nasser in 1967. He could not bring himself to believe that Egypt had much to fear from Israel alone. He read the events of 1956 as meaning that Israel could not hope to win unless backed by at least one great power. He thought that he could count on either an Egyptian victory in a one-to-one war or an Israeli backdown that would be the equivalent of an Egyptian victory without war. In effect, his objective was the fruits of war, with or without war. Isolating the battlefield was the key to his strategy in 1967, and for this grand maneuver to succeed, everything seemed to depend on how he handled the United States.

Nasser decided to forgo a first strike solely in order to isolate Israel. An Egyptian first strike, he thought, vastly increased the danger of U.S. intervention; an Israeli first strike vastly decreased it. His motivation, then, had nothing to do with avoiding a war with Israel; it was solely guided by his best judgment of how to win it.

Significantly, Nasser's first impulse after he knew that he had lost the war was to blame active U.S. intervention for his defeat. In his desperately ludicrous telephone conversation with Hussein on June 6, the second day of the battle when he already knew some of the bad news but not all of it, it was Nasser who had the idea of putting out a phony story about imaginary attacks from American and British aircraft carriers. It took him almost a year to withdraw this alibi for the Egyptian debacle (in the interview in *Look*, March 19, 1968). This legend was more than a purely arbitrary, senseless canard; it betrayed in a distorted fashion what had long been in his mind as the necessary precondition for an Israeli victory.

Nasser, in fact, succeeded in achieving the isolation of the Middle East battleground. To this extent, his strategy was not badly designed. If it failed in the end, the fault was elsewhere.

In order to encourage an Israeli first strike, Nasser had to believe in the decisive superiority of his own armed forces. They had to be able to take a first strike with minimal losses and hit back with crushing effect. For this reason, it was so vital for Field Marshal Amer to get the Egyptian air force commander's estimate of Egyptian losses in the opening Israeli attack. When Sidqi Mahmud answered "20 per cent," the necessary relationship of forces for a successful Egyptian counterattack against an isolated Israel appeared to be satisfied. Heykal had made known the Egyptian strategy before the war: "As of now, we must expect the enemy to deal us the first blow in the battle. But as we wait for the first blow, we should try to minimize its effect as much as possible. The second blow will then follow. But we will deal this blow to the enemy in retaliation and deterrence. It will be the most effective blow we can possibly deal" (*al-Ahram*, May 26, 1967). Six days before the war, the then Jordanian Prime Minister who accompanied King Hussein to Cairo heard Field Marshal Amer saying that the fight against Israel would last only a few days and "be a picnic." This highly placed Jordanian source summed up the fate of the two aspects of Nasser's strategy as follows: "Nasser was deceived by Egyptian intelligence regarding the Israeli power and Israel's real aims. He also had the illusion that he had won the diplomatic campaign against the United States and Britain."* In his post-mortem speech after the war, Nasser implicitly admitted that the military side of the war had been miscalculated: "Here we should acknowledge with complete honesty and complete dignity that the military fight did not proceed the way we expected or desired" (July 23, 1967). And at his trial, former Defense Minister Badran testified that, if all had gone as planned and Egypt had lost only the 20 per cent that it had expected, "there was no one [in the Egyptian air force] who believed that the Jews would have any capability left to mount an operation against us," owing to the vaunted superiority of the Egyptian air force and the excellence of the Egyptian war plan. Indeed, Badran still would not concede that Israel alone had beaten Egypt. He attributed Israel's victory to the Americans who had allegedly given the Israelis the benefit of American aerial reconnaissance, down to "every nail in every [Egyptian] airplane."

Unlike President Kennedy, who had assumed full responsibility for the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961, Nasser unloaded all the blame on his generals. To one American correspondent he complained: "What helped the Israelis the last time was not so much their cleverness, but the conceit and complacency of our generals. They felt Israel would never attack. They even overestimated their own strength. And because of that, they failed to take

* Jum'ah, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-72.

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elementary precautions" (*Newsweek*, February 10, 1969). In another interview, he forgave himself: "I was not handling military matters before the 1967 war" (*Time*, May 16, 1969).

When an enemy's "aggression" and "first strike" become part of one's own war plan, something strange and ominous has obviously happened to the meaning of these terms. Even in 1973, when the Israelis were clearly the victims of an Arab first strike, the Arabs and their Soviet backers persisted in a bizarre propaganda campaign against "Israeli aggression." Is what has happened in the Middle East a portent of what may come elsewhere? Has "aggression" virtually lost its meaning in the circumstances of modern warfare? Does it have any relationship to the "first strike" any longer?

At minimum, the Arab propaganda about the "Israeli aggression" in 1967, let alone that in 1973, deserves to be rejected with derision and contempt. If ever a war was willfully and knowingly provoked, it was the 1967 war. In this respect, the two wars are different only in form, not in substance. The Egyptians decided to give the first strike to Israel in 1967 and to take it for themselves in 1973 for exactly the same reason—they thought it was best for them. In so doing, they have set precedents of such gravity and peril, not least to themselves, that the whole problem of war and peace in the entire world may never be the same again.

V

In a number of other ways, the wars of 1967 and 1973 seem to be as closely related as were the wars of 1956 and 1967.

It is almost as if the Arabs asked themselves in 1973 what the Israelis had done in 1967 and had then decided to do likewise. The Arabs obviously concluded that it had been a mistake to make the Israelis deliver the first strike in 1967. They were going to do it themselves in 1973. The Arabs were surprised by the sheer weight and intensity of the opening Israeli attack in 1967. They were going to start off with an equally massive movement of men and materiel in 1973. The Arabs were impressed by their failure to wage a simultaneous, multi-front war in 1967, enabling Israel to deal with Egypt first and turn on Syria and Jordan afterward. They were going to synchronize major offensives from Egypt and Syria, holding Jordanian and other Arab forces in reserve, in 1973.

Jordan's role in 1967 has been widely misunderstood, and a similar misunderstanding in 1973 is less excusable. It was generally thought that Hussein had waited until the last minute to make up his mind about getting into the 1967 war and that he did so only after he was convinced that Egypt was sure to win.

We now know from Hussein himself that this was not the case.

Two books on Hussein have appeared, with his blessings, since the 1967 war. The first, published originally in French in 1968, is largely made up of Hussein's own words. The second, by an English writer, published in 1972, was also written with Hussein's cooperation. Both tell more or less the same story of how Hussein got into the war.*

As soon as Nasser announced the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba on May 22, 1967, Hussein decided that war was inevitable. In the next two days he made his decision: to get into it. On May 26, Hussein called in the Egyptian ambassador in Amman and asked him to arrange a meeting with Nasser. The latter accepted Hussein's overture on May 29; Hussein flew to Cairo the following day; a reconciliation took place between the former enemies; Nasser assured Hussein that his forces were superior to the Israelis'. Hussein later insisted: "Nasser never appealed to us. We were the ones who appealed to him."

That Hussein was totally unprepared to play the role of an effective Egyptian ally does not change the political significance of his behavior, especially for the United States which has consistently supported him. In the event of an Arab-Israeli war, Hussein is sure to take Jordan into it, whatever the state of his preparedness. If he ends up on the losing side, he is equally sure to come to Washington for another handout. He behaved in 1973 exactly the same way that he had behaved in 1967. Hussein went to Cairo on September 10 of this year; he released hundreds of political prisoners, including Palestinians who had tried to overthrow him, on September 18; and war broke out on October 6. When this one is all over, we may expect to be told how he knew everything in advance and had made up his mind long before anyone had guessed what he was up to.

As for the other Arab countries, the 1973 war was far better coordinated and prepared than that of 1967. When Nasser arranged to have the 1967 conflict, he still had about 50,000 troops in Yemen, where he was virtually fighting a war against King Faisal's Saudi Arabia, which was supporting the Yemeni royalists. In 1973, Egypt had lost so much ground in the internecine Arab struggle for power that it no longer posed a threat to Saudi Arabia and, indeed, was happy to accept Faisal's advice as well as his money. Nasser went into the 1967 war with barely more than a rickety military alliance with Syria to which Jordan even more dubiously attached itself. Sadat went into the 1973 war after mobilizing the entire Arab world for military, financial, and diplomatic support.

* Vick Vance and Pierre Lauer, *Hussein de Jordanie: Ma "Guerre" avec Israël*, Albin Michel (Paris), 1968; Peter Snow, *Hussein*, Barrie & Jenkins (London), 1972.

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Nevertheless, the inter-Arab aspect of every Arab-Israeli war should not be neglected or underrated. The Arab world is far from being a unity; the ancient as well as modern rivalries and grudges persist behind the façade of solidarity. Nasser once aspired to leadership of the entire Arab world, and he used such causes as the Yemen civil war and the anti-Israeli *jihad* to serve his ends. Every war that Egypt fights against Israel weakens her in relation to the other Arab powers. In any case, Egypt cannot have it both ways. Saudi Arabia's Faisal is paying Egypt not only to fight Israel but also to spend Egyptian energies that might be—and have been—directed against him. For Faisal, it is tails I win and heads you lose.

Arab propaganda in 1973 also seems to have learned something from 1967. In the previous war, the candor of the Arab spokesmen, who either threatened to turn the clock back to 1948 in the manner of Nasser or promised to leave no Israeli survivors alive in the raw language of Ahmed Shukairy, then head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, clearly backfired. This time, the Arabs decided to be more restrained in their declared demands and to use more evasive formulas such as restoring "the legitimate rights of the Palestinians." In 1967, candor came before the war; in 1973, it was put off until the end of the war—assuming that the Arabs would then be in a position to be candid about what "the legitimate rights of the Palestinians" are.

As for Israel, its successful surprise attack in 1967 ironically contributed to the success of the Arab surprise attack in 1973. The Israeli intelligence and preparedness failure in this war was, at least in good part, a product of the same kind of underestimation of the enemy that proved so costly to the Egyptians in the previous war. The initial Israeli setback had its deeper roots in the changed social conditions in Israel after 1967, the widespread disdain for the Arab ability to wage a coordinated, modern war, and a pervasive sense of satisfaction with the post-1967 status quo. General Hubris seems to have changed sides. Nasser's complaint about Egyptian "conceit and complacency" may be just as close to the truth in its Hebrew translation—except that the Israelis had enough back-up leadership and reserve stamina to turn the tide of battle.

VI

In his news conference on October 12 of this year, six days after the present war started, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger made a strange and disturbing statement. Of the Soviet role, he said: "If you compare their conduct in this crisis to their conduct in 1967, one has to say that Soviet behavior has been less provocative, less incendiary, and less geared to military threats, than in the previous crisis."

This statement has gone into my "Duke-of-Wellington file," so called from the Duke's reply to someone who had greeted him as Mr. Smith: "If you can believe that, Sir, you can believe anything."

In 1967, the Soviet leaders were certainly provocative and incendiary, but they were also more confused and constrained by more limited military capabilities. They peddled the still unexplained story about Israeli troop concentrations on the Syrian border which helped to give Nasser the thought of putting into effect Field Marshal Amer's six-months'-old idea of chasing out the UN forces and taking over Sharm el-Sheikh. Subsequently, the Soviet commitment to Egypt and Syria was twofold. Without Soviet war materiel and training programs, the Arabs could not have contemplated going to war. But there was another essential function which the Soviets promised to perform. As explained by Nasser to Jordanian Prime Minister Sa'd Jum'ah, "the contact between our people and the Soviet leaders has assured us that they will come quickly to our support in the event of U.S. intervention."* Thus Nasser took out an additional insurance policy with the Soviet Union against the United States. Overconfident of the success of Arab arms, he was more interested in keeping the United States out of the battlefield than in bringing the Soviet Union in.

Yet the Soviet Union pursued a policy of limited liability, to the disappointment of Nasser when his plans went awry. He later blamed the Soviets as well as the United States for misleading him about their ability to hold Israel back (July 23, 1967). Another deep grievance was their failure to fly in more planes on an emergency basis or provide the Egyptian forces with air cover as soon as the extent of the Egyptian losses was known. Acording to Nutting, Nasser told his former Vice President, Abdel Latif Boghdady, that the Soviets "had been frozen into immobility by their fear of a confrontation with America."† In any event, the Soviets did not attempt to keep the Egyptian army going with a large- or small-scale resupply operation in 1967.

This, too, changed in 1973. The Soviets were again in on the war at the start, but experience had taught the Arabs to keep them in, at least for the purpose of resupply, during the war. The Soviet role was far more provocative, far more incendiary, far more geared to military action in 1973 than it had been in 1967. There was nothing in 1967 comparable to at least two Soviet actions in 1973—the huge, prompt resupply effort for Egypt and Syria, and the *démarches* to Iraq, Algeria, and other Arab countries urging them to get into the fight against Israel with the express ad-

* Sa'd Jum'ah, *Mujtama' al-Karahiyah* ("The Society of Hatred"), in Arabic (Beirut), 1972, pp. 127-28.

† Nutting, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

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monition that the advanced Soviet equipment had been given to them for this very purpose. If only for these reasons, Kissinger's excessive solicitude for Soviet sensibilities may or may not have been good diplomacy but it was certainly bad history.

LET US now go back and try to reconstruct, in its main lines, how the Soviet Union was implicated in the Arab decision to go to war again.

Nasser at first needed a breathing spell and hoped against hope to retrieve his fortunes through the United Nations and joint U.S.-USSR pressure on Israel. In March 1969, he launched what he called a "war of attrition" against Israel; it cost him dearly and he called it off in July. By the end of 1969, his frustration could no longer be contained. On November 6, he made a speech in which he for the first time talked of using force again "to open our own road to what we want, over a sea of blood and under a horizon of fire."

At this time, however, Nasser had not yet made a new deal with the Soviets, and without it he was helpless to convert his words into deeds. This dilemma sent him to Moscow from June 29 to July 17, 1970, one of his longest stays in the Russian capital, when he succeeded in getting the Soviets to install the first SAM-3 missiles near the Suez Canal, though the Soviets still insisted on training Egyptians to use them. Soon afterward, Nasser accepted the so-called Rogers Plan, named after the former U.S. Secretary of State, providing for an Egyptian-Israeli cease-fire for ninety days to set the stage for intensive peace negotiations. In effect, Nasser was preparing to move either way, though his faith in the Rogers Plan must have been minimal.

A cease-fire agreement was signed on August 7, 1970. It prohibited military build-ups or offensive action within a zone at least 32 miles wide on each side of the canal. The United States and the Soviet Union were co-signatories, and an American spokesman defined the understanding in unmistakable terms:

> The depth of the cease-fire was described as sufficient to assure Israel that neither Egypt nor the Soviet Union would expand military positions—especially the Soviet SAM-2 and SAM-3 anti-aircraft missile sites—into the 32-mile belt along the canal during the truce.
>
> The informed sources said that the Soviet Union had given the United States a "categorical commitment" to abide by the requirement not to build up positions in this zone during the truce. This enabled President Nixon to give Israel firm assurances on this point.*

This categorical commitment and these firm assurances were worthless as soon as they were made. Even such kindly chroniclers of Nasser as Jean Lacouture and Anthony Nutting admit that the missiles were installed in violation of the August 7 cease-fire.† We now know that the U.S. government knew all about the violations and failed to live up to its assurances. Senator Henry M. Jackson has revealed that he tried to persuade Kissinger, then the President's national-security adviser, to recognize that "the accumulated result could do irreparable harm to Israel's security" and to insist on the removal of the missiles.** His efforts were fruitless.

Nasser died in September 1970. It was the end of the Arab-Israeli postwar Phase 1.

NASSER'S successor, Anwar el-Sadat, also needed a breathing spell before he was ready to go to Moscow.

Sadat permitted the cease-fire to last until March 1971. Then came the following timetable:

March 1-2: Sadat in Moscow.

March 7: Sadat ends the cease-fire.

March 20: A special "War Preparation Committee" headed by Sadat orders nationwide measures to mobilize the national resources for the eventuality of war (*al-Ahram,* March 21, 1971).

March 22: Abdel Mohsen Abul-Nur, Secretary General of the Arab Socialist Union, Egypt's only political organization, declares at a rally at Aswan that "the only way for us now is a military solution" and "our armed forces are now ready to force him [Israel] to withdraw" (New York *Times,* March 25, 1971).

March 24: The New York *Times* correspondent in Cairo, Raymond H. Anderson, writes: "A new wave of weapons and military equipment deliveries from the Soviet Union has reached the United Arab Republic in the last few weeks, according to reliable Western sources, coinciding with stepped up, widely publicized measures by the Egyptian leadership to prepare the country for war" (*ibid.*).

The fullest and bluntest expression of Egyptian thinking came, as usual, from Muhammad Hassanein Heykal on March 26. In an article entitled "The Inevitable War," he wrote that "this war will be long, fierce, and complicated, but there is no alternative." As if the Egyptians were merely trying to improve on their 1967 strategy, he concluded: "While the stage is prepared by political means, the Egyptian military forces are

* New York *Times,* August 8, 1970.

† "The demon which impels certain rulers always to seek a little more gain or 'profit' incited the Soviet-Egyptians, after the cease-fire of August 7, to place their missile launching sites nearer the canal. These were the famous SAM-3's, obtained by Nasser six months earlier from Moscow" (Jean Lacouture, *op. cit.,* p. 341). ". . . The Egyptians were unable to install all the missiles within the time limit and so were obliged, to the accompaniment of loud protests from the Israelis, to commit a technical breach of the cease-fire by moving the late arrivals onto appointed sites after the August 7 deadline" (Nutting, *op. cit.,* p. 450).

** New York *Times,* October 17, 1973.

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ready to start war against Israel—a war which is inevitable, as I have already said. It is inevitable against Israel, but it is avoidable against any other factor [in the situation] except for Israel."

In an interview later that same year, Heykal incautiously acknowledged that Egypt was after far more than the post-1967 "occupied territories." Speaking to an Arab publication, he said: "It's not enough to return to the borders of 1967. Adjustments are needed which it is unlikely that Israel will make." As Nasser's literary heir, he also stated: "He [Nasser] wanted the Arab world, and the whole world, to realize that a peaceful settlement was impossible, so that it would no longer be a subject for discussion. As a result, the Arab world will organize itself and prepare for a long struggle on many fronts."*

After these bold words, the Egyptian leadership hesitated for a few months owing to more diplomatic maneuvering. By the beginning of last year, however, the original decision to go to war was reaffirmed, as Sadat disclosed in a speech on January 13, 1972:

> We have reached the conclusion that the battle has been forced upon us. We took this decision in 1971, but a little fog descended upon us and we had to find our way all over again.

On January 25, 1972, he reiterated:

> We must be prepared for battle since we have adopted the view that the problem can only be solved by force.†

After this, the only open questions were the preparation, the timing, and the tactics. There is reason to believe that the final, operational decision did not come until last summer, but the political decision goes as far back as two years ago. Unlike Nasser, Sadat did not intend to telegraph the blow. Since he was determined to strike first, there was no need for a complicated escalation of threats and stratagems to get the Israelis to do anything. In fact, the less the Israelis did, the better. Having made their decision, the Egyptians were faced with many complex problems vis-à-vis the Soviets, the other Arab countries, and the non-Arab world, especially the United States. Without going into the details here, it is enough for our purpose to note how long ago the fundamental Arab decision was made and how closely it followed another mission to Moscow.

WHENEVER Arab statements are cited, the question of Arab "rhetoric" arises. Should it be taken seriously or are Arabs peculiarly addicted to hyperbolic bombast? Whenever an Arab spokesman says something particularly provocative or outrageous, there is always someone who says that "they never really mean it." One writer has maintained that the Israeli case has been more "believable" because of Arab "irrationality" and that Arab leaders invariably tell Arab audiences merely "what they *wish* to hear."** I have even heard the foreign minister of an Arab country instruct a group of Americans that Arabs are allergic to Western rationalism and that, if Westerners wish to deal with Arabs, they must adopt the seemingly irrational Arab mode of thinking. Former Ambassador Battle has related that one of the first things Muhammad Hassanein Heykal told him was: "Don't try to understand us. We don't understand ourselves."†† But in that case, why should anyone try?

Whatever one may think about Arab rhetoric and rationality, Arab politicians who know the West perfectly well are not above taking advantage of what may well be nothing more than a patronizing or apologetic attitude on the part of some Westerners. It enables them to operate on the basis of a political double-bookkeeping system—one version for their own people and the same words but in a bowdlerized version for the West. I am inclined to agree with an acute Israeli student of Arab ideas and attitudes, Dr. Yehoshafat Harkabi, a former chief of Israeli army intelligence and now a lecturer at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Dr. Harkabi has this to say about the difference between private and public utterances in the West and in Arab countries: "If in the United States a private statement is an indication of real intentions, the reverse seems to be true, very often, in Arab countries, where public proclamations are more significant than soft words whispered to foreign journalists. Even if the masses cannot impose their will on their leaders by democratic processes, the importance of the public declarations lies in the fact that they create commitments and arouse expectations that the leadership will practice what it preaches."***

Certainly, both Israelis and Westerners would have been better advised and more nearly forewarned if they had taken Arab public proclamations and declarations quite literally since at least 1971. Too many Westerners treat the Arabs as if they were irresponsible, irrational, petulant children who go into a tantrum every time they do not get what they want. Even if some Arabs invite it, this Western attitude does no one any good, least of all the Arabs whom it encourages to indulge in irresponsible histrionics.

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* *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Beirut), Autumn 1971, p. 19.

On July 14, 1972 Heykal denounced the widespread visits of Arabs to Israel—150,000 a month that summer—by arguing: "Israel wants to deprive the Arabs of their chief weapon, which is their nonacceptance of Israel . . . it is a method of disarming the Arab rejection of Israel. . . ."

† *Ibid.*, Spring 1972, for the text of both speeches.

** Hisham Sharabi, *Palestine and Israel,* Pegasus, 1969, pp. 125-26.

†† New York *Times Magazine,* October 21, 1973.

*** Y. Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes to Israel,* Israel Universities Press (Jerusalem), 1972, p. 390.

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VII

Ever since the so-called Soviet-American détente was consecrated in Moscow by President Nixon in May 1972, the ambience of détente has been inextricably linked with the latest phase of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Americans were admittedly caught off guard by the outbreak of the 1973 war. They were "burned"—to use Treasury Secretary Schultz's elegant phrase—as much in the Middle East as in the celebrated "grain deal." We still do not know whether the Russians were able to get such a favorable deal simply because they were so much smarter than the Americans or whether the latter were unusually complaisant owing to a bureaucratic understanding that détente means keeping the Russians happy by giving them more or less what they want, at least in the economic sphere. The American rationale has seemed to be: give now, get paid later.

This bad American habit of going from cold to hot in Soviet-American relations did not start with Mr. Nixon. The pattern was set by so vastly different a President as Franklin D. Roosevelt. If a Roosevelt and a Nixon can lurch from one extreme to another in this highly inflammable area, something is deeply wrong.

When Roosevelt decided to recognize the Soviet regime in 1933, his hopes were high. Soon disappointed, he lost interest and Soviet-American relations in the 1930's settled down to a low level of economic exchange and diplomatic intercourse. With the Soviet attack on Finland in 1939, however, Roosevelt went into his most extreme anti-Soviet phase. He privately expressed disgust at "this dreadful rape of Finland." He told Ambassador Joseph C. Grew in Tokyo that "people are asking why anyone should have anything to do with the present Soviet leaders because their idea of civilization and human happiness is so totally different from ours." He stated publicly in February 1940 that "the Soviet Union, as everybody who has the courage to face the facts knows, is run by a dictatorship as absolute as any other dictatorship in the world."

Yet, after Russia entered the war the following year, his attitude changed miraculously, though nothing had changed in Russia's internal setup. By September 1941, he tried to convince Pope Pius XII that freedom of religion in Russia was a real possibility. He advised newsmen to read the article in the Soviet Constitution guaranteeing freedom of conscience, as if the reality could be found there. He boasted that he "got along fine" with Stalin. He told both Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles and Cardinal Spellman that the difference between the United States and Soviet Russia was going to be reduced from a ratio of 0 to 100 to one of 40 to 60.*

Those who choose to remember only Roosevelt's wartime attitude toward Russia have oversimplified him. A President who could change so drastically from the anti-Soviet 1939-mid-1941 period to the pro-Soviet late-1941-1944 period could easily change back again. Yet the disturbing fact remains that Roosevelt could not conduct a policy of wartime cooperation with Russia without sowing illusions about the Soviet regime.

A somewhat similar phenomenon has accompanied the Nixon policy of détente. Nixon, like Roosevelt, has made his Soviet policy a personal one. Roosevelt imagined that he alone was capable of dealing cozily with Stalin and that he alone could cajole concessions out of "Uncle Joe," as Stalin was endearingly called. Now we have Mr. Nixon telling us, at his news conference on October 26, that "it's because he [Brezhnev] and I know each other and it's because we have had this personal contact that notes exchanged in that way result in a settlement rather than a confrontation." Oddly, this personal contact did not prevent a confrontation from erupting before it resulted in a "settlement," as ill-timed and ill-defined as any in recent years, extorted under the menace of unilateral Soviet military action. The two most persuasive "notes" that Mr. Nixon communicated to Mr. Brezhnev were unwritten and unsent—the first on October 13, when Mr. Nixon decided to start the resupply effort to Israel, and the second on October 25, when he took what were delicately called "certain precautionary measures" of a military nature. If there is one area in our foreign policy which should be essentially *impersonal*, it is that dealing with the Communist powers, Communist China as well as Soviet Russia. Roosevelt's personal diplomacy with Stalin was one of his costliest aberrations. There is much less excuse for Nixon and Kissinger to repeat it with Brezhnev and Chou En-lai.

But this is only part of the trouble. One of the most delusory documents in American diplomatic history was signed on May 29, 1972, by Richard Nixon, President of the United States of America, and Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee CPSU. It was grandiosely entitled, "Basic Principles of Relations Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." As a compendium of illusions and effusions, it reminds one of the "Atlantic Charter" of 1941, which Kissinger had the misfortune to recall nostalgically earlier this year. The second and third "basic principles" of the charter of détente are particularly pertinent to the Arab-Israeli war:

* The above two paragraphs are based on: Robert A. Divine, *Roosevelt and World War II*, Johns Hopkins Press, 1969, p. 77; *F.D.R. His Personal Letters, 1928-1945*, Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1950, Vol. II, pp. 961, 1204-05; *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Macmillan, Vol. IX, p. 93; Vol: X, pp. 401-02; Vol. XII, p. 558; Sumner Welles, *Where Are We Heading?*, Harper, 1946, p. 37; Robert I. Gannon, *The Cardinal Spellman Story*, Doubleday, 1962, p. 224.

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SECOND. *The USA and the USSR attach major importance to preventing the development of situations capable of causing a dangerous exacerbation of their relations. Therefore, they will do their utmost to avoid military confrontations* and to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war. They will always exercise restraint in their mutual relations, and will be prepared to negotiate and settle differences by peaceful means. *Discussions and negotiations on outstanding issues will be conducted in a spirit of reciprocity, mutual accommodation, and mutual benefit.*

Both sides recognize that efforts to obtain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other, directly or indirectly, are inconsistent with these objectives. The prerequisites for maintaining and strengthening peaceful relations between the USA and the USSR are the recognition of the security interests of the Parties based on the principles of equality and the renunciation of the use or threat of force.

THIRD. *The USA and the USSR have a special responsibility,* as do other countries which are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, *to do everything in their power so that conflicts or situations will not arise which would serve to increase international tensions. Accordingly, they will seek to promote conditions in which all countries will live in peace and security and will not be subject to outside interference in their internal affairs.* (Emphasis added.)

WHAT has all this to do with the Arab-Israeli war of 1973? The answer is that the main Soviet effort to prepare the Egyptian and Syrian armies for war took place after this declaration of principles was signed. I do not mean to oversimplify Arab-Soviet relations over the years. They have had their ups and downs; Sadat brought in hordes of Soviet "advisers" and technicians in 1971 and sent most of them out in 1972. Yet the two sides managed to patch up whatever differences they may have had, and Soviet planes, tanks, missiles, and the myriad of other war materiel poured in to enable the Arab armies to take the offensive. The upshot seems to be that the Soviets have invested in their Arab proxies too heavily since 1955 to let go so easily; whatever their difficulties and rebuffs may have been, the Soviets have not permitted them to stand in the way of a long-term policy which has now persisted for eighteen years despite upheavals in the Soviet leadership.

After Mr. Nixon and Comrade Brezhnev signed their names to these beautiful sentiments, détente became the chief political capital of the Nixon administration. The more the President was forced to wallow in the Watergate and associated ignominies, the harder Mr. Nixon tried to sell the blessings of détente. It was almost the only thing he could sell, and he repeatedly tried to change the subject from Watergate to détente.

In Washington, it became almost indecent to say anything nasty or naughty about the two great Communist powers. They order this matter better in China. On August 24 of this year, Premier Chou En-lai delivered a report to the 10th National Congress of the Chinese Communist party in which, détente or no détente, he referred scathingly to both the United States and the Soviet Union. They were "contending for hegemony," "are in a sorry plight indeed," "want to devour China, but find it too tough even to bite," and—this for U.S. imperialism alone—it has "started to go downhill" and "has openly admitted that it is increasingly on the decline." If such a speech were made by President Nixon or Secretary Kissinger about China, their whole "structure of peace" would seem to come tumbling down, and Washington would quake with rumors of the return of hot, cold, or lukewarm war.

The trouble, of course, is not détente. It is the illusions that détente has fostered or that have been fostered in the name of détente. Unfortunately, détente with illusions is worse than no détente at all; one-sided détente is worse than no détente at all. While Mr. Nixon and Dr. Kissinger were basking in the warmth of détente, the Russians were heating up a war in the Middle East. While a new academic doctrine was developing that the Soviet Union had become a conservative, status-quo power that abjured risks and renounced upsetting the existing balance of forces, the Soviet Union was preparing to take incalculable risks to upset the precarious balance in one of the most sensitive areas in the world. If the President and Secretary of State had not developed a case of unwonted bashfulness on the subject of Soviet Russia, they might have asked some embarrassing questions about how the USSR had lived up to the "Basic Principles."

Had the USSR tried to prevent "the development of situations [in the Middle East] capable of causing a dangerous exacerbation of their relations"? Did the USSR do its utmost "to avoid" this military confrontation? Was the approaching war in the Middle East ever discussed with the United States "in a spirit of reciprocity, mutual accommodation, and mutual benefit"? Had the USSR sought "to obtain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other [U.S.], directly or indirectly"? Did the USSR do everything in its power "so that conflicts and situations [in the Middle East] will not arise which would serve to increase international tensions"? Accordingly, did the USSR "seek to promote conditions [in the Middle East] in which all countries [including Israel] will live in peace and security and will not be subject to outside interference [*viz.*, Russian tanks, planes, and missiles] in their internal affairs"?

No such questions have been raised, at least publicly, about a document only a year and a half old. President Nixon was so far from realizing how close the Soviet-backed Arabs were to

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war that he decided to blame both sides indiscriminately and to disclaim being pro-Israel or pro-Arab only a month before the outbreak of hostilities. This "evenhandedness," as it was called, might have made sense if General Secretary Brezhnev had come out with more or less the same thing. In the circumstances, it was an invitation for the Russians and Arabs to catch the American leaders unawares. After the outbreak, Kissinger still thought it necessary to compare Soviet behavior in 1973 favorably with Soviet behavior in 1967 and to characterize the former as not yet "irresponsible," as if he were waiting for the Russians themselves to attack Israel before entertaining the thought that they might have gone too far. It took him a little while to realize that it was pointless to make excuses for Russian responsibility. When Kissinger rushed off to Moscow at the behest of General Secretary Brezhnev, he could not fail to give the impression that the Russians could turn the war on and off as they pleased. They may even be blaming him for having unwittingly misled them about the price the United States was willing to pay for the privilege of participating in a détente with them.

Secretary Kissinger might usefully reread some of Professor Kissinger's old writings, especially an article on the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Eleven years ago, President Kennedy was also caught by surprise and then reacted strongly. Now President Nixon has told us that the 1973 Soviet-American confrontation was the worst since the missile crisis. In the earlier case, Kissinger was not satisfied with mere self-congratulation. He asked some deeper questions, which might also be asked now. He admonished that "even this success does not free us from the need to understand how we arrived at the point where such a dramatic and risky action was necessary." He wanted to know "what tempted the Soviets into so rash, so foolhardy an adventure"? Or, as he also put it, "with the stakes so high, what made the Soviets believe that they could get away with it?"

Part of the answer, Kissinger indicated, pointed in the direction of U.S. policy before the missile crisis. "Over the past decade," he suggested, "Khrushchev may well have become convinced that the United States would never run risks to protect its interests, either because it did not understand its interests or because it did not have the appropriate doctrine for using its power."* A similar line of thought might well be pursued now. What was there about previous U.S. policy that had given Khrushchev's successors the idea that they could take such an exorbitant risk in the Middle East and expect to get away with it? Soviet moves of such gravity are not taken in a vacuum; they reflect, among other things, a perception of U.S. policy. Was the policy of détente, as publicized and practiced before October 1973, an "appropriate doctrine" for warning off the Soviet Union from "so rash, so foolhardy an adventure"? We were once instructed by Professor Kissinger that "the test of statesmanship is the adequacy of its evaluation *before* the event" (emphasis in original).† By this test, his statesmanship in this instance was somewhat less than adequate.

If, as the usually sober and trustworthy International Institute for Strategic Studies in London estimates, the Egyptians had as many as 1,000 Soviet "advisers and instructors," the Syrians 3,000, and the Iraqis 1,500, and the Egyptian army closely followed Russian tactical procedures, on top of the fact that the immense accumulation of war materiel was entirely Soviet, the Soviet Union was up to its neck in this war. Some people like to make a distinction between whether the Soviets encouraged the Arabs to go to war and whether they merely acquiesced in it. The practical difference is negligible. The Soviets encouraged it by acquiescing, and they would have discouraged it by refusing to acquiesce. They have, at minimum, a veto power over any Arab action on this scale. If they choose not to exercise it, they might as well push the button to let it go on. In fact, the vast and expensive effort the Russians must have made to render this war possible required a major decision on the part of the Soviet leadership many months ago. By its very nature, that decision entailed secrecy and deception, made all the more necessary because it was in flagrant violation of both the letter and spirit of that charter of détente solemnly signed in May 1972 at the insistence of the Russians.

The starting point for any reconsideration of U.S. policy in the coming months is that the Soviets prepared this war under cover of the détente. It was the 1973 edition of the Soviet-Arab strategy for isolating Israel and the Middle East battleground. In the division of labor between the Arabs and the Soviets, the former are supposed to do the fighting and the latter to run diplomatic and other interference. If this is still not enough to insure an Arab victory, the Soviets are then expected to blow the whistle, call off the game, strong-arm the Security Council, and, in the event of an imminent Syrian-Egyptian military collapse, stave it off by all possible means, even to the extent of threatening to take over the war from its Arab proxies. A détente which permits the Soviets to play such a double game is doomed to end in disillusionment and recrimination.

In his news conference on October 26 President Nixon tried to answer criticism of the détente by arguing that "without that détente we might

* Henry A. Kissinger, "Reflections on Cuba," the *Reporter*, November 22, 1962, pp. 21-2.

† *The Necessity for Choice*, Harper, 1961, p. 3.

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have had a major conflict in the Middle East. With détente, we avoided it." This is a most peculiar interpretation of what détentes are for. In Mr. Nixon's view, a détente can apparently take us to the very brink of a major conflict, as if that were not the business of a détente to avert. But if the major conflict is avoided by a last-minute display of precautionary power, credit for the allegedly happy ending should go to the détente. The awkward fact is that the dénouement of October 22-25 was the result of the oldest of old-fashioned power plays on both sides. If this is what détente signifies, the word has become meaningless and we might as well trade it in for something less pretentious and disarming. When President Kennedy faced up to Khrushchev in 1962, he did not find it necessary to pretend that it had anything to do with something like détente.

The Israelis have reason to be grateful to the United States for the aid which they received when they needed it most. After a week of bureaucratic wavering and division, President Nixon acted with forcefulness and decision. For the future, however, the policy before October 13 is more alarming than the policy after that date is encouraging. If U.S. policy is going to be based on deals with Soviet Russia, it will have to find a way to stop the Russians from underwriting Arab wars instead of stopping wars that do not go according to the Russian-Arab plan. If détente is helpless before the first and operates only in the second fashion, it will be dishonored the same way another perfectly good word, "appeasement," was dishonored before World War II.

Judging from Brezhnev's speech to the World Peace Congress in Moscow on October 26, the task of salvaging détente from the wreckage of this war will not be easy. Listening to Brezhnev, one might imagine that nothing worth mentioning had happened in the Middle East before October 22, the day the Security Council voted the first cease-fire. Here was the leader of a great nuclear power, which had aided and abetted a reckless, perfidious aggression against Israel on Yom Kippur, unctuously accusing Israel of "perfidiously" violating Security Council decisions, continuing "aggressive action" against Egypt, and exhibiting "the recklessness of the peace-violators." One would have given much to hear someone at this "peace" congress ask Mr. Brezhnev why he waited until the Egyptian army was on the verge of collapse before he bethought himself to denounce the violation of peace in the Middle East. Or to inquire how a nation which as a result of World War II had acquired 272,500 square miles of territory with a population of 24,168,000—a territory as large as Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq combined, with a population two-and-a-half times as large—could without shame tell any other nation that "acquiring territories through means of war" was impermissible.*

The 1973 war has also had far more serious international repercussions than the previous one, not least in the United Nations. Rarely, perhaps never, has the world organization been so crudely used to provide a fig-leaf for naked great power. Fig-leaves, to be sure, have their uses or they would not have been invented. It was undoubtedly better for the UN to furnish a small-power cease-fire force than to have direct Soviet and American armed intervention in the area. That Sadat begged for the latter showed that, in desperation, he had become more interested in bringing the Soviets in than in keeping the Americans out. Nevertheless, the convenience of the UN's role is small consolation for the damage that was done to the organization and that it did to itself. Its members, if they have any consciences left, will long have to account for the fact that they did nothing to restore peace when Israel was in danger but hurriedly passed one "peace resolution" after another, with hardly any time to know what they were doing, as soon as Egypt was in danger. This war may well be to the United Nations what the Italo-Ethiopian war was to the League of Nations.

VIII

FROM war to war, the essential Arab strategy has become increasingly clear. Gimmicks will not make it go away, and UN resolutions have mainly served to exacerbate it.

The essence of that strategy was put in five words by former President Nasser to Eric Rouleau: "Time works in our favor" (*Le Monde*, February 19, 1970). This idea, giving impetus to every successive war, has been the *leitmotif* of Arab and Soviet propaganda for a long time.

The result is that the Arab countries want to end as well as to start wars in their own way. As we have seen, it has pleased them to give and also to take the first strike. As soon as they get into trouble, however, they expect someone else—the Soviet Union, with or without the United States, the United Nations, the oil-consuming na-

* As a result of World War II, the Soviet Union acquired the following territories and population, some of which had been former conquests of the Czarist Empire, which the Bolsheviks had disavowed in 1917, and some of which had never belonged to Russia at all:

	Sq. miles	*Population*
Lithuania	24,000	3 million
Latvia	20,000	2 "
Estonia	18,000	1.1 "
Eastern Poland	68,000	10 "
Bessarabia and Bukovina	19,000	3.7 "
Moldavia	13,000	2.2 "
East Prussia	3,500	0.4 "
Carpatho-Ukraine	5,000	0.8 "
West Karelia	16,000	0.5 "
Petsamo	4,000	0.004 "
Tannu Tuva	64,000	0.06 "
Southern Sakhalin	14,000	0.4 "
Kurile Islands	4,000	0.004 "

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tions—to get them out of it. The manufacture of myths about why they lost—Israel was the "aggressor," the United States intervened in some unfair fashion, the Soviet Union did not do enough—becomes a national passion. After the 1948 war, the young Egyptian officers, of whom Nasser was representative, blamed a corrupt regime. After the 1956 war, Nasser blamed Britain and France. After 1967, he blamed the United States, his generals, his allies.

In order to make every defeat inconclusive, it is necessary to act as if the defeat did not really take place. Other countries have, after all, fought wars and lost. But when has a country sought to dictate the terms of peace negotiations to the victor? The answer is that the Arabs are not yet interested in a peace and they consider themselves to be the ultimate victors. In immediate defeat, they yet feel it necessary to act as if they were going to have the last word. For this reason, the Arabs have always been interested in a cease-fire, whatever it may be called, not in a definitive peace. A cease-fire implies that a battle has been lost; a peace might imply that a war has been lost. The language which Arabs use to convey their intent should not deceive us. Its form is psychological, but its content is political. It would be "humiliating," we hear interminably, to negotiate with Israel while Arab land is still occupied by the Israeli army. If the Arabs have to be spared all humiliation, it would be necessary to undo far more than the 1967 war; that kind of psychological therapy would go right back to the equally disastrous and humiliating 1948 war. Among themselves the Arabs consider the very existence of Israel to be their real "humiliation"; the surrender of the post-1967 occupied territories in advance of negotiation would only be a start toward relieving Arab humiliation on the installment plan. To negotiate on the basis of only one side's psychological propensity is obviously an absurd and futile exercise.

These tactics flow from the Arab assumption that "time works in our favor." It sometimes takes the form of boasting that the Arabs can afford to have a war every few years, and Israel cannot. Or that Israel can only fight a short war, and a long one is sure to favor the Arabs. The trouble with such theories is that, even if there is some truth in them, there is rarely a military problem, providing it is sufficiently clear, for which there is absolutely no answer. The French, for example, were convinced that the Germans could not break through the Maginot Line in World War II. Whether or not the French were right, the Germans disappointed them by going through Holland and Belgium, thereby outflanking the Maginot Line. The history of warfare is full of such "challenges and responses." The idea that the Arabs can have as many wars as they please may well be their mental Maginot Line. It gives the Israelis the moral and psychological advantage of always fighting what may be the last war, while the Arabs need not go to the bitter end because there is still another and better war in the offing. The most serious flaw in the theory, however, is something else. *It inevitably escalates the level of every war.* From 1948 to 1973, each Arab-Israeli war has increased in scope and costliness. The Israelis cannot tolerate an infinite series of wars; the Arabs have started every war at a greater disadvantage than the last one. The whole theory of time working inevitably and inexorably in favor of the Arabs is a formula for the most destructive war yet.

If the 1973 war is not the last Arab-Israeli conflict, the next one is sure to be worse. If Soviet-American-UN diplomacy can come up with nothing better than a retreaded version of all the gimmicks that failed in the past—the UNEF in another guise, the slippery UN resolution of November 22, 1967, indirect "negotiations," ambiguous formulas and face-saving evasions—the result will again be a cease-fire rather than a peace.

And if it is to be a cease-fire in all but name? Arab strategy in 1967 and 1973 has virtually made meaningless the terms "aggression" and "first strike." It is too much to expect any Israeli government and high command to take chances next time. The lesson of 1967 for Egypt was that Israel should not have the first strike, and the lesson of 1973 for Israel is that Egypt should not have the first strike. From now on, the finger will always be on the trigger. Let us pray that the lesson for both sides is that they must reconcile themselves to each other's existence, to the realities that have been brought about by a unique and singular set of circumstances, to the realization that the entire fabric of Arab-Israeli history cannot be unraveled.

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Kissinger & the Politics of Détente

Walter Laqueur

HENRY Kissinger's appointment as Secretary of State, confirmed by Congress last September, was accompanied by a wave of publicity unprecedented in recent American history. Never before on similar occasions had there been such interest, so much comment for and against, and it was probably also the first time that the personality of a future Secretary of State had attracted several biographers even before he took office. Kissinger had, of course, already played an important part for several years in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. His name stood for secret missions, dramatic announcements, important new ventures. He was a friend of the media and a welcome guest at Washington parties. In the eyes of many, his initiatives were the one redeeming feature of an otherwise disastrous administration. Thus, Victor Zorza in the Washington *Post* informed his readers that Kissinger was already "working with his usual skill on a series of foreign-policy initiatives as breathtaking and as interlaced as his earlier schemes," while James Reston informed the readers of the New York *Times* that Kissinger's philosophy was based on such profundities as that "Life is Suffering, Birth involves Death, Transitoriness is the fate of Existence."

But Kissinger's appointment provoked not only sympathetic comment; there were also attacks—from Left, Right, and Center. A writer in the *Nation* was struck by the resemblance between Kissinger and Joachim von Ribbentrop, the Nazi foreign minister. A *National Review* commentator, in an article entitled "A Foreign Policy without a Country," characterized Kissinger as an unassimilated outsider—"a European by heritage and cultural choice, a cosmopolitan by circumstance, an American by deliberate (and hazardous) calculation."* William V. Shannon of the New York *Times* referred to Kissinger as "Nixon's congenial colleague and moral peer," whereas Anthony Lewis, also of the *Times,* thought him little better than a trickster and con man.

The charge most frequently leveled was that Kissinger was an "intellectual elitist" and that he had practiced "deception." As Senator Abourezk of South Dakota, who opposed the nomination, remarked: "What has been wrong with our foreign policy since 1945 is that it has been conducted in secret by a few people." In some ways Senator Abourezk's criticism did not go far enough, for was the situation any different prior to 1945, either in the United States or anywhere else? Perhaps the world would be a better place if foreign policy were abolished altogether. More moderate critics stressed the need for a more open, non-partisan, middle-ground policy acceptable to the mass of the American people, a policy that would have the support not only of the President but also of Senator Fulbright and his friends, of "globalists" and "neo-isolationists," of those favoring an adequate defense program and those demanding drastic cuts in military spending.

Fully aware that a greater measure of public support was needed, Kissinger countered by stressing the need for a new consensus ("which can give a new impetus and a new excitement to our foreign policy for the next decade or two"). Brave words, these, but he must have known that the search for a consensus would be an uphill struggle. Outside the foreign-affairs establishment and a small circle of experts, interest in world politics is strictly limited. Compared to those in Europe or Japan, the average American newspaper devotes very little space to foreign affairs, and there seems to be no great pressure for more information. It is no secret that most Senators and Congressmen speak with infinitely more authority on domestic affairs than about events outside America; the same, of course, is true with regard to other countries. No way has been found to abrogate the "iron law of oligarchy" in foreign affairs. "No foreign policy—no matter how ingenious, has any chance of success," says Kissinger, "if it is born in the minds of a few and carried in the hearts of none."

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* "When Kissinger . . . opened his heart to the bitchy Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci and likened himself to a solitary cowboy hero ('Americans admire that enormously'), he revealed the derivative nature of his national identity in almost pathetic fashion. He cuts a dashing figure in chic drawing-rooms; ordinary Americans would never mistake him for John Wayne."

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Foreign policy, alas, is not usually carried in the hearts of men except in extreme cases, when they face a clear and present danger. Kissinger will endeavor to gain wider support for his policy in Congress and among the media. But if he succeeds, it will still be an "elitist foreign policy," even though there may be fewer complaints.

ONE OF the side effects of Kissinger's rise to eminence was a sudden revival of interest in Castlereagh and Metternich, triggered off by his book, *A World Restored.* Political commentators, not previously known for their expertise in the intricacies of early 19th-century European diplomacy, have been eagerly leafing through the pages of this book, expecting to find some useful leads—if not the master key—to Kissinger's grand design for the 1970's. Nowadays no article, and few columns, seem complete without a quotation or two about the Metternichian system or Bismarck's *Realpolitik.* The purpose of these exercises is not readily obvious unless, of course, one happens to believe in the universal applicability of certain "lessons of history," the philosophers' stone of the historians. Both Nixon and Kissinger have said that businessmen and lawyers, because of their training and background, are not ideally suited to dealing with foreign affairs. Whether historians and political scientists are any better prepared is a moot point. If lawyers tend to be nit-picking, preoccupied with legal complications and implications, the occupational disease of the historian is to consider essentially new situations in the light of previous experience, to ignore what is novel and unique in them. The study of diplomacy does not necessarily produce great statesmen, just as the study of scientific discovery is only of limited help in achieving new breakthroughs in science.

Kissinger's advantage over many of his colleagues was that he always concerned himself with events in the real world rather than theoretical abstractions; in addition, there was his ability to express himself in clear language. Beyond this, the study of his intellectual development as revealed in his early writings is of limited relevance to the understanding of his more recent activities. In the world of politics, as he sees it, one should be guided by a realistic approach rather than by ideological preconceptions, and certainly not by excessive expectations. Early on he accepted the fact that the number of options in any given situation is limited. Throughout the 50's and 60's he was engaged in a running and, on the whole, sensible critique of the conduct of American foreign policy, faulting it not so much for being basically wrong as for being insufficiently subtle, for lacking an overall concept, and for failing in initiative. Sometimes he was clearly wrong—for example, in his assumption that the West had missed a unique opportunity to negotiate with the Russians in the late 40's, in his excessive admiration for de Gaulle, in his doctrine of limited nuclear war. About the Soviet Union and its willingness to work for a stable world order, he had few illusions. When Harold Macmillan, then British Prime Minister, talked about the "thrill of hope and expectation around the world" aroused by the Geneva meetings between the leaders of West and East, Kissinger called it a fatuous statement typical of the philosophy of personal diplomacy. Twelve years later, he was himself to speak, in terms not wholly dissimilar to Macmillan's, about the "revolutionary change" and the "dramatic transformation" that had taken place in the world situation, about historical missions and the beginning of a new era, about establishing common interests with the Soviet Union through a "strategy of linkages."

Until July 1971 the full extent of Kissinger's role in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy and the ideas underlying it was not yet widely known. It was only when his meeting with Chou En-Lai was first announced, and particularly after his visits to Moscow and his negotiations with the Vietcong, that the limelight was focused on him. He was subsequently acclaimed as the architect of détente who had put an end to the war in Vietnam, had negotiated SALT I, liquidated the remnants of the cold war, and laid the foundations for a new and constructive relationship with the USSR and China. There was some criticism —Japan had been neglected and Europe not consulted—but on the whole there was much admiration for the vision, the persistence, the diplomatic skill and ingenuity which had been invested in what was generally acclaimed as a historic turn in world politics and not just a temporary improvement in the international climate such as had been witnessed many times since 1945.

Since then there have been second thoughts on the extent and the significance of Kissinger's achievements, and *a fortiori* on his prospects in the years to come. It was, I believe, Bismarck who said in his old age that the true measure of a statesman was whether a certain event would have taken place without him or not. But for Lenin the Russian revolution of 1917 would not have taken place; but for Weizmann there would have been no Balfour Declaration. Yet it seems fairly certain that American involvement in Vietnam would have come to an end with or without Kissinger, that there would have been a rapprochement of sorts with both the USSR and China, and that there would have been some kind of agreement with the Soviet Union on the limitation of strategic arms. For the pressures to end the war in Vietnam had become overwhelming by 1968, and the growing hostility between Peking and Moscow following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia made it appear highly likely

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that both sides would look for closer relations with Washington. It was Kissinger's good fortune that he became the President's adviser at the very moment that America, despite Vietnam, had aquired greater freedom of maneuver than at any time since the end of the Second World War.

Of Kissinger's achievements so far, his role in the negotiations to end the war in Vietnam are to be rated highest. The facts surrounding the negotiations in Paris are known only in part. Granted that the whole operation was no more than a rearguard action, and that in historical perspective it may appear devoid of significance in determining the fate of Southeast Asia, it is difficult—given the violent domestic opposition to the war—to imagine what more could have been accomplished than a breathing spell of at least a few years for the South Vietnamese to enable them to stand on their own feet and defend themselves—or to be overrun by the North. Again, the Sino-Soviet conflict helped in the last phase of the war, but one could easily think of considerably worse possibilities that might have occurred, of missed opportunities with the war dragging on and a unilateral American pull-out with all its inevitable psychological and political consequences.

It is unlikely that similar claims can be made with regard to SALT I, welcomed by Kissinger at the time as an agreement "without precedent in all relevant modern history." This appraisal will no longer be shared by many people, and it is perhaps more than just coincidence that most of those who negotiated SALT I have moved on, or were moved, to other assignments. It was argued at the time that the SALT I agreements ended the arms race; Soviet superiority with regard to missiles, throw weight, and megatonnage did not matter, since America had what the strategists call "assured destruction." But U.S. strategic forces had been at a stable level since 1968, whereas the Russians had been building up their armaments at a very energetic rate (and are still doing so to this day). It is by no means certain that they could have built more ICBM's and submarine launchers than specified in SALT even if they had tried. True, numbers did not greatly matter so long as Soviet missiles were not very accurate, but with rapid technological improvement, not to mention the application of MIRV, erasing the American advantage in warheads, the Soviet Union is moving from parity to potential superiority—while staying within the letter and spirit of the SALT agreement.

John Newhouse, in his *Cold Dawn*,* characterizes SALT as a modest interim agreement. He sees as most useful the fact that the two sides engaged in a frank, open, nonpolitical dialogue on the weapons most vital to their security. But even this judgment may well be unduly optimistic. While frank and open dialogues are always welcome, it cannot be said with any confidence that the bargain was a good one from the American point of view or—since it may well be an obstacle to any further significant progress toward arms control—that it was in the interest of world peace. The Soviet strategists clearly do not share American ideas about parity and assured destruction; if they did, they would hardly engage in a costly build-up of their strategic forces. Kissinger has argued that if U.S. negotiators had insisted on equality, on including offensive as well as defensive weapons (ABM), agreement would certainly not have been reached in 1971. But would this have been such a great loss, given the problematical character of the treaty?

It is equally likely that if the Soviet leaders had been told unequivocally that America was firmly though regretfully resolved to match any Soviet strategic build-up, a more effective and far-reaching agreement might have been concluded two or three years later. All that can be said in defense of SALT I is that once the Soviet negotiators realized that the Americans had stopped building strategic weapons, that there was strong domestic resistance to matching the Soviet defense effort, that the Nixon administration was under growing political pressure to reach an agreement on offensive weaponry, the chances of a better agreement diminished considerably. The Soviet negotiators, in other words, were operating from a position of strength whereas Kissinger was batting, to use the English phrase, on a sticky wicket. These are mitigating circumstances; they do not make SALT I a success.

SALT I was the cornerstone of the coexistence declaration of May 1972 and the accord on avoiding atomic war signed in June 1973. The declarations published on these occasions stated that both sides proceeded from the common belief that in the nuclear age there is no alternative to peaceful coexistence, that they wished to base their relations on the principles of sovereignty, equality, non-interference in internal affairs, mutual advantage, and mutual restraints. This was, of course, very good news, but in the last resort, it was not the wording but the spirit of the agreement which mattered, the relationship established between Nixon and Kissinger on the one hand and Brezhnev and his colleagues on the other. Nixon and Kissinger detected in Brezhnev a willingness to cooperate in establishing a structure of peace, an international system in which the participants would "operate with a consciousness of stability and permanence." As Brezhnev told a group of American businessmen during his visit to Washington in June 1973: "We have certainly been prisoners of those old tendencies, those old trends, and to this day we have not

* Reviewed by Jeffrey Marsh in the August 1973 COMMENTARY.

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been able fully to break those fetters." In the view of Nixon and Kissinger, Brezhnev and most, if not all, Soviet leaders wanted to enter history as the men who had liquidated the cold war, normalized relations with the United States, and moved toward cooperation in many fields. Brezhnev's admission that both sides might have been "prisoners of old tendencies" certainly contradicted the official Soviet version of the cold war, which, according to the *Soviet Diplomatic Dictionary*, is "the policy of the United States and their allies in the imperialist military blocs toward the Soviet Union and other Socialist States after the Second World War."

ABOUT the price of détente, few people worried in the first flush of rejoicing. Even the grain deal was held up at the beginning as an example of mutually advantageous relations;* doubts about this and other deals only began to creep in later. In the general mood of good will it seemed tactless to ask to what extent American and Soviet concepts of détente coincided. For the Americans, détente was a concept aimed at a "generation of peace," at stabilizing not merely the arms race but the international order in general. Was this how the Soviet leaders saw it as well? Not to seek "unilateral advantages at the expense of the other" was an admirable sentiment, but what did it mean in practice in a changing world? Nixon and Kissinger probably had few illusions on this score. The ideological differences would, of course, persist and so would the ultimate objectives of the other side. No one could reasonably expect the Soviet leaders to give up their basic beliefs from one day to the next. But was there not at least a good chance that détente would develop a momentum of its own, that an enlarging area of common interests would eventually diminish the intensity and rigidity of Soviet doctrine? Was it not likely, in other words, that if the status quo lasted long enough, the Soviet Union, too, would become a status-quo power—if indeed it had not become one already?

Notwithstanding their sweeping declarations, Nixon and Kissinger must have known that there were no certainties in this respect; it is less clear whether they did not underrate the domestic consequences of their own declarations, the mood they were bound to engender. In a closed society, the repercussions of détente could be easily controlled. There was no risk that Soviet senators would demand drastic reductions in the defense budget, the dissolution of the Warsaw pact, the closing of radio stations and other such relics of the cold war. By contrast the American architects of détente faced a very real dilemma. Their accords, and even more so their rhetoric, provided grist to the mill of those who had maintained all along (and who could now claim with much greater justification) that the military confrontation was over and that there was a powerful convergence of vital Soviet and American national interests. Hence the obvious conclusion that the ruinously expensive military and political apparatus inherited from a bygone period could be safely dismantled. Such arguments, needless to say, were undermining the détente policy of the administration, which understood only too well that the road to peace was long and arduous, and that unilateral disarmament—military, political, or moral—would not bring the goal any nearer.

The U.S. rapprochement with the Soviet Union was greatly aided by the Sino-Soviet conflict, but at the same time it presented a major obstacle to an improvement in relations with China. This was certainly not the only hurdle, but it was the most important by far. For Mao, Chou, and their comrades, America, in contrast to Russia, was no longer a serious military and political danger, and thus they were bound to regard with misgiving any agreement likely to strengthen the Soviet Union and give it greater political and military freedom of maneuver.

This fact was, of course, no secret to Kissinger: "I have no particular reason to suppose that they [the Chinese leaders] will necessarily approve a bilateral agreement between the U.S. and the Soviet Union whatever its consequences," he said at a press conference in June 1973. To the Chinese leaders, American willingness to prop up the national economy of their adversary and to assist, directly or indirectly, in strengthening its military potential was highly suspicious, and the American tendency to ascribe to the Russians a real change of heart disturbing. The Chinese would have preferred a deterioration in U.S.-Soviet relations which would have given China at least a decade or two of protection from pressure, and possibly from attack. But how could they have prevented an American-Soviet rapprochement short of offering the U.S. a political and military alliance directed against Russia? This would have been the natural course of action in a world free of ideology and nuclear weapons. But an explicit and formal alliance with the main bastion of Western imperialism would have presented the greatest difficulties in view of China's ideological commitment. These difficulties were compounded by a far from stable domestic situation in China and debates on its foreign political orientation, the course and results of which are not so far fully known in the West.

* "The sales of grain to the Soviet Union have had, of course, beneficial effects on our balance of payments and have reduced the expense to the American taxpayer of soaring surplus agricultural products," *United States Foreign Policy 1972: A Report of the Secretary of State*, p. 314.

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SHORTLY before his appointment as Secretary of State, Kissinger quoted Theodore Roosevelt in a speech ("Mighty things must be dared"), but the number of rabbits on the international scene being limited, one can reasonably assume that the days of pulling them out of hats are over and that the three years to come will be something of an anti-climax. It is bound to emerge that the developments that have been taking place in world affairs of late, though dramatic in character, were not necessarily "revolutionary changes" (Kissinger's phrase), and that there is a world of difference between a normalization of relations and an enduring structure of peace. For the issues presently facing Kissinger and U.S. foreign policy are either unglamorous—like international trade—or, like relations with Europe and the situation in the Middle East, to a large extent insoluble.

So far as Europe is concerned, the basic problem is still the inability of the European nations to make progress toward political and military cooperation. A strong and united Europe could collaborate with America as an equal, or alternatively follow a third-force, Gaullist policy. A disunited and impotent Europe can do neither, and there is unfortunately reason to believe that no amount of persuasion will induce Europeans in the foreseeable future to speak with one voice, let alone to act with one political will. On the American side, despite the promises not to disengage from solemn commitments to allies and not to withdraw from Europe unilaterally, the only question now is how many troops will be withdrawn, whether this will happen a little earlier or a little later, and how far the weakening of the American position in Europe will go. After a visit to London and Paris Senator Mansfield wrote last summer that it may now be too late to salvage much more than a NATO in mothballs and that the U.S. can ill afford to be deflected from the course of détente by the anxieties of the West Europeans. Such views find much support in Congress and they greatly weaken the position of the Secretary of State in his negotiations with Europe.

The Middle East presents even greater difficulties. Quoting President Nixon as his authority, Kissinger said soon after his appointment that the Middle East was not only important, but "perhaps the most dangerous area"—a judgment which the Soviet role in the outbreak of the October war amply confirmed. The Soviet Union was informed officially about the war in a letter from Sadat to Brezhnev on September 22. But the many Soviet military advisers must have known about it several weeks before. Without their knowledge, not a tank unit, not a SAM base, could be moved in Egypt or Syria. Evidently the prospect of war appealed to the Russians. If cautiously and cleverly managed, a new round of fighting in the Middle East could cause great damage to the West without harming the prospects of détente. While giving strong support more or less discreetly to the Arabs, the Soviets could at the same time approach the West with a statesmanlike and responsible stance: the Middle Eastern conflict was, after all, *sui generis*; once its causes had been removed one could really settle down to a period of close and mutually beneficial collaboration. It could be safely assumed that at least some politicians in Washington and the European capitals would be only too willing to take the Soviet line at face value. If, on the other hand, Western suspicions about Soviet intentions should be greater than expected, or if things should turn out badly on the battlefield, it would always be possible to retreat and to participate in working out a peace settlement. The Soviet problem, in short, was not whether or not to support the war, but how far Russia could go in encouraging the Arabs without destroying Western illusions about détente.*

Even before the outbreak of the October war, there were second thoughts in America, and to a still greater extent elsewhere, about the benefits that had accrued so far, and that were likely to accrue to America in the future, in the fields of arms control and economics. Above all, questions about the price of détente were more and more being raised with regard to the treatment of political and intellectual dissent in the Soviet Union. Asked about this in the course of his Senate confirmation hearings, Kissinger said, "We don't disagree about the human problem, but we have to ask ourselves whether it should be the principal goal of American foreign policy to transform the domestic structure of societies with which we deal."

This argument is unassailable as far as it goes; Chancellor Brandt has put it even more strongly, and American leaders emphasized even at the height of the cold war that they had no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. ("We do not propose to subvert the Soviet Union. We shall not attempt to undermine Soviet independence," Dean Acheson declared in a famous speech in April 1950, defining his concept of containment.) However sad the fate of Soviet dissenters, however reprehensible the policy of internal repression, such considerations cannot affect the overriding exigencies of peaceful coexistence. Even if Soviet repression were far harsher than it is at present, even if there were not the slightest chance that the Soviet regime would ever mellow, the efforts to remove the danger of nuclear war would have to be pursued with undiminished vigor.

But this is merely stating the obvious, and it leaves basic questions unanswered. For the dé-

* Kissinger's role in bringing about the cease-fire agreement between Israel and Egypt—an event which occurred after this essay was written—deserves to be treated separately.

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tente policy, including the agreements scheduled to reduce and ultimately to remove the danger of nuclear war, have to be based to a large extent on trust. How can such trust be established in dealing with an isolated autocracy in which there is no public opinion, no checks and balances, no right of free expression? This is not an abstract issue but involves very real practical problems. It was relatively easy to reach agreement in SALT I about the number of ICBM's, for the number of holes can be fairly reliably justified. But SALT I was only a prelude, and to make substantial progress there will have to be agreement on the limitation of MIRV and a ban on ASW (anti-submarine warfare) research, which are the main destabilizing factors in the arms race. There are, however, no known means of policing such agreements, and since the Soviet Union is unalterably opposed to on-the-spot inspection, the U.S. would have to take its assurances on trust.

To take another example: the Soviet Union has recently proposed that all five nuclear powers should agree to cut their defense budgets by 10 per cent—an admirable suggestion if there ever was one. The American defense budget is not a secret; it is specified down to the last dollar every year in great detail in dozens of volumes open to public inspection. But no one in the West, and only a handful of people in the Soviet Union, know the real size of the Soviet defense budget. If, then, agreement were reached tomorrow to slash defense spending by 10 per cent, any attempt to cheat by the Americans could be instantly detected, whereas the Soviet Union could easily increase its budget instead of reducing it, and no one would be any the wiser.

These are some of the questions facing the United States in its relations with the Soviet Union, and they all point to an apparently insoluble dilemma: that the U.S. must not interfere in Soviet domestic affairs, and that on the other hand any separation between Soviet foreign and domestic policies is virtually impossible. In the past, on more than one occasion, Kissinger himself wrote scathingly about Western diplomats who thought that good faith and the willingness to come to an agreement were enough in dealing with a power which did not accept the legitimacy of the existing international system but intended to replace it by a world order of its own. Nor did he show much patience with those who explained Soviet policies with reference to their "basic insecurity," and who put their hope in the progressive *embourgeoisement* of the Soviet Union. By the late 60's, however, Kissinger was saying, in a Brookings Institution symposium, that "the Soviet Union may not be willing indefinitely to use the Red Army primarily against allies as it has done three times in a decade and a half"; the Communist leaders, he now maintained, "*must* [my emphasis] make sooner or later the choice whether to use détente as a device to lull the West or whether to move toward a resolution of the outstanding differences." This statement contains at least three doubtful assumptions: that the Soviet Union is somehow bound to make a choice; that there is no third way between "lulling" the West and the "resolution of outstanding differences"; and that the "outstanding differences" can be resolved by agreement and are not, at least in part, inherent in the very character of the two distinct political systems and their conflicting global interests.

One should perhaps not make too much of incautious formulations. What mattered in Kissinger's eyes was above all the advent of nuclear-strategic parity between the U.S. and the USSR, the Sino-Soviet conflict, and the willingness of the Russian leaders, especially Brezhnev, to engage in practical talks about the preservation of peace and "mutually beneficial cooperation." Whatever the reasons which induced the Soviet leaders to decide on a new peace plan at their 24th Party Congress in March 1971, Kissinger knew as a student of history that no society is immune to the laws of change and that immobility, the lack of initiative, had been the main defect in American diplomacy in recent decades. Even if the Soviet leaders regarded peaceful coexistence only as a tactical phase in their ultimate strategy of expanding their political power, was it not possible that a lengthy period of peaceful coexistence and collaboration would trigger irreversible internal changes in the Soviet system —not of course in a year or two, but in the perspective of several decades? Was it not true that the Soviet leadership had become largely bureaucratized, guided by *Realpolitik,* expediency, and enlightened self-interest? Could not American leaders influence Soviet policy by strengthening the hands of the Soviet pragmatists against their doctrinaire rivals? Was not the age of superpowers drawing to an end, and with it the rigidity of military bipolarity which overshadowed more than two decades of postwar history? Was not the emergence of a "pentagonal balance" making for new and dynamic relationships in a world in which power would no longer translate automatically into influence, and in which smaller nations would have an unprecedented scope for autonomous action?

Some of these propositions are at best only half valid: no pentagonal world system is in sight; there is no symmetry (for if America is retrenching, the other side is not); neither Finland nor Czechoslovakia has much scope for autonomous action.* Let it be assumed, however, for the sake of argument, that the general anal-

* See my articles in COMMENTARY, "The Fall of Europe" (January 1972), "The World of the 70's" (August 1972), and "From Globalism to Isolationism" (September 1972).

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ysis is correct and that, in any event, diplomacy should not be based on a worst-case analysis but should act in accordance with the philosophy of "as if." Even so, how is the overall objective—the creation of that climate of greater trust of which Brezhnev himself has spoken—to be achieved without an opening up of Soviet society? Of this, however, there is no reasonable prospect. The Soviet regime may become more liberal over several decades or perhaps even sooner, following some unforeseen developments, and American pressure may even result in certain concessions (obviously desirable in themselves) with regard to the treatment of individual dissenters or the number of Jews permitted to leave the Soviet Union. But even if there were no Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn, or Jewish activists, the basic problem would still exist. There are narrow limits beyond which the Soviet Union cannot go for reasons having to do with the structure of the regime. To make détente dependent on basic changes, such as the granting of elementary human rights in the Soviet Union, is asking the impossible. In other words, for years to come the United States will have to negotiate with Russia not on the basis of trust, but only on the assumption that in certain fields it may be possible to cooperate.

THREE years is perhaps too short a time to accomplish "mighty things," but it is long enough to burn one's fingers. The last few years have been comparatively calm on the whole, but there are still plenty of latent danger zones quite apart from the Arab-Israeli conflict, Southeast Asia and the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean and Latin America. There are also difficult problems of U.S. foreign policy not involving war or the possibility of war but still of great consequence. There is, for instance, the problem of relations with Japan, which will be more important during the foreseeable future than relations with China. There is the question of American policy toward the Third World. Addressing the United Nations, Kissinger spoke eloquently about a world based on common purposes and the dangers of a world divided between the permanently rich and the permanently poor. But the problems that will face the United States during the years to come in Asia, Africa, and Latin America will be more concrete in character, and about them Kissinger will be able to do little.

The Watergate scandals will act as a spur to the administration in its search for results in foreign policy. At the same time the weakness of the administration, its greater dependence on a distrustful Congress, will narrowly circumscribe Kissinger's freedom of action and preclude any major initiatives. His steps will be closely watched by Congress and by a public pressing for incompatible objectives: not to negotiate from a position of strength—since the cold war and the political confrontation with the Russians are presumably over and done with—but not to talk from a position of weakness either; to spend as little as possible on defense and on foreign aid, but also not to give up anything and to maintain American influence abroad; to be friendly to the Russians, but also to induce them to make substantial concessions on issues on which they are particularly touchy; to withdraw American troops from various parts of the globe, but also to persuade America's allies that the U.S. is as strong as before and that it will stand by its commitments; to press Japan and Western Europe to help America reduce its balance-of-payments deficit without necessarily reciprocating in kind.

Kissinger cannot hope to accommodate all these demands even to a limited extent. He will have to preside over America's decommitment, to take care that it is carried out as smoothly and as painlessly as possible. This process can be described as a long overdue withdrawal from an exposed position, a realistic adjustment to a new world situation. But it will also be interpreted by Russians and Europeans, by Chinese and Japanese, as a retreat from power which makes it imperative for them to reconsider their own positions. Kissinger has assured them that American policy aims at a more stable world order, at greater security for all, at a world community based on shared aspirations. They will say "amen" and go on thinking their own thoughts, which are that the old global game continues, and that only the rules have changed, not in America's favor.

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Auden's Achievement

Clive James

For a long time before his death, the fact that a homosexual was the greatest living English poet had the status of an open secret: anybody with better than a passing knowledge of W. H. Auden's writing must have been in on it, and in his later essays (one thinks particularly of the essays on Housman and Ackerley) he was teetering on the verge of declaring himself outright. During E. M. Forster's last decades the intelligentsia was similarly privy to covert information. At Forster's death, however, the obituaries—many of them written by old acquaintances—didn't hesitate to let the cat spring from the bag and dash about among a wider public. It isn't recorded that anybody died of shock at this revelation, and one would have thought that a precedent for plain dealing had at long last been set. With Auden's demise, though, there has been a retreat into coy mummery—perhaps to protect his dedicatees still living, but more probably because no respectable *literatus* wants the responsibility of firing the gun that will set the young scholars off on their plodding race to re-explicate what any sensitive reader has long since seen to be one of the unassailably transcendental poetic achievements of the modern age. Poor scorned clericals, they will find that their new key turns with bewitching ease, but that it might as well be turning in a lake as in a lock. Auden is a long way beyond being a crackable case.

Nevertheless, the truth helps. It was an often-stated belief in Auden's later essays that knowledge of an artist's personal life was of small relevance in understanding his work. Insatiably and illuminatingly inquisitive, Auden transgressed his own rule on every possible occasion. The principle was the right one, but had been incorrectly stated. He was saying that to know the truth will still leave you facing a mystery. What he should have said was that to know the truth will leave you with a better chance of facing the *right* mystery. And it quickly becomes evident, I think, that to accept the truth about Auden's sexual nature does nothing to diminish his poetry—quite the opposite. Acceptance leads in the very short run to the realization that the apparent abstractness of Auden's expressed sensuality is really a lyricism of uniquely abundant resonance, and in the long run to the conviction that Auden's artistic career, taken as a whole, is a triumph of the moral self living out its ideal progress as a work of art. (I should say at this point, to ward off misunderstanding about the kind of salute I am making to Auden's memory, that my admiration for his stature as a sensual being translating his passionate nature into the universal doesn't make me a homosexual.)

Auden's first poems instantly revealed an unrivaled gift for luminous statement. Simply by naming names he could bring anything to life:

> *Who stands, the crux left of the watershed,*
> *On the wet road between the chafing grass*
> *Below him sees dismantled washing-floors,*
> *Snatches of tramline running to the wood*
> *An industry already comatose. . . .*

After the withering of 30's illusions it became fashionable to laugh at "Pylon" poetry, but even though intentions do not make deeds there was always something honorable in the intention of domesticating a technological imagery, and anyway Auden himself had only to intend and the deed was done. So formidable a capacity to elevate facts from the prosaic to the poetic had been seen rarely in centuries, and such fluent gestures in doing it had almost never been seen. Auden's poetry possessed the quality which Pasternak so admired in Pushkin—it was full of *things*. And yet in an epoch when homosexuality was still a crime, this talent was the very one which could not be used unguarded to speak of love.

For that, he was forced from the concrete to the abstract, and so moved from the easy (for him) to the difficult. As Gianfranco Contini definitively said when talking of Dante's dedication to the rhyme, the departure point for inspiration is the obstacle. The need to find an expression for his homosexuality was the first technical obstacle to check the torrential course of Auden's unprecedented facility. A born master of directness was obliged straightaway to find a language for indirection, thus becoming immediately in-

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volved with the drama that was to continue for the rest of his life—a drama in which the living presence of technique is the antagonist. There is no other example of this drama in English: the parallels are all Dantesque.

Doom is dark and deeper than any sea-dingle.
Upon what man it fall
In spring, day-wishing flowers appearing,
Avalanche sliding, white snow from rock-face,
That he should leave his house,
No cloud-soft hand can hold him, restraint by women;
But ever that man goes
Through place-keepers, through forest trees,
A stranger to strangers over undried sea,
Houses for fishes, suffocating water,
Or lonely on fell as chat,
By pot-holed becks
A bird stone-haunting, an unquiet bird.

In this first stanza of Poem II in *Poems* (it was entitled "The Wanderer" only later, in *Collected Shorter Poems 1930-1944*) the idea of the homosexual's enforced exile is strongly present, although never explicit: the theme lies hidden and the imagery is explicit instead, thereby reversing the priorities of the traditional lyric and bodying forth an elliptical suggestiveness which rapidly established itself as the new lyricism of an era. But already we are given a foretaste of the voyage that came to an end in Oxford forty years later—a wanderer's return to the Oxford of *Another Time*, the center of anger which is the only place that is out of danger. Auden never looked for cloistered safety until very late on the last day. The danger and fatigue of his journey were too much of an inspiration.

There head falls forward, fatigued at evening
And dreams of home,
Waving from window, spread of welcome,
Kissing of wife under single sheet;
But waking sees
Bird-flocks nameless to him, through doorway voices
Of new men making another love.

Only tiredness could make the doomed traveler dream the banalities of hearth and wife: awake, he is once again involved with real love. And real love is a new love, with all political overtones fully intended. Auden's radicalism, such as it was, was at one with his sexuality, with the subsequent result that he spent the 30's experiencing Communism as sensual and sex as political.

As Brecht found his politicized lyricism in sophistication (*In der Asphaltstadt bin ich daheim*), Auden found his in innocence: masturbation in the dormitory, languishing looks between prefects and blond new boys, intimate teas and impassioned lollings on grassy hillsides. The armies and the political parties of the 30's were the thrillingly robust continuation of school rugger and cricket teams, and were likewise composed of stubborn athletics and prize competitors. Bands apart, they were all male and Hellenic—and the neo-Hellenism of the 30's was all Teutonic. Auden's political and intellectual spectrum in the 30's is mainly German, and it's harder than the gullible might think to pick his emotional allegiance between the two sets of muscle-packed shorts, Communist or Nazi. Intellectually, of course, he didn't fool with fascism for a single moment; but to his sexual proclivities the blond Northern hero made an appeal which only a poetic embodiment could resolve—it took pearl to silence the irritation set up by those vicious specks of grit.

Save him from hostile capture
From sudden tiger's leap at corner;
Protect his house,
His anxious house where days are counted
From thunderbolt protect,
From gradual ruin spreading like a stain;
Converting number from vague to certain,
Bring joy, bring day of his returning,
Lucky with day approaching, with leaning dawn.

Toward the glamor of the opposing teams—the chaps—Auden's feelings were ambiguous. So were his feelings toward his own homosexuality. Like many homosexuals he seems to have experienced homosexual congress as the only clean kind, and thus had no reason to hesitate in identifying homosexuality with a new political order. Nevertheless guilt remained. In the 30's it was a cultural residue (later on, when Auden returned to Christianity, it became a religious precept), but was no less powerful for that. Just as, in another poem, the "ruined boys" have been damaged by something more physical than the inculcation of upper-class values which Left readers delightedly assumed, so in this last stanza of "The Wanderer" the spreading ruin is something closer to home than the collapse of Europe. There was fear in Auden's pride about his condition. Fear of the police, and fear that the much-trumpeted corruption might be a fact. He thought that heterosexual people could enjoy security but that only homosexuals could enjoy danger; that the intensity of the homosexual's beleaguered experience was the harbinger of a new unity; but that, nevertheless, the homosexual was unlucky. In the last line of this most beautiful of young poems, he doesn't really expect luck to be granted or his kind of day to dawn. It's yet another mark of Auden's superiority that whereas his contempoaries could be didactic about what they had merely thought or read, Auden could be tentative about what he felt in his bones. (It was marvelous, and continues to be marvelous, that the *Scrutiny* critics never detected in Auden his unwearying preoccupation with the morality of his art, nor realized that a talent of such magni-

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tude—the magnitude of genius—matures in a way that criticism can hope to understand but not prescribe.)

It will be useful, when the time comes, to hear a homosexual critic's conjectures about the precise nature of Auden's sexual tastes. It seems to me, who am no expert, that Auden's analysis of Housman's guilt feelings (he said Housman was so convinced a Hellenist that he felt ashamed of being passive rather than active) was an indirect admission that Auden was passive himself. Even in the earliest poems he seems not to be taking the lead, and all too often is the forsaken one, the one who loves too much and is always asking his beloved to share an impossibly elevated conception of their union.

You whom I gladly walk with, touch,
Or wait for as one certain of good,
We know it, we know that love
Needs more than the admiring excitement of union,
More than the abrupt self-confident farewell,
The heel on the finishing blade of grass,
The self-confidence of the falling root,
Needs death, death of the grain, our death,
Death of the old gang. . . .

But as Auden half-guessed that it might turn out, the old gang wouldn't go away: oppression would always be a reality and homosexual lovers would continue to live in fear and fragments. Out of this insecurity as a soldier in a lost army, it seems to me, emerged Auden's unsettling obsession with the leader principle—a version of *führerprinzip* which was in fact no more Hitlerite than Stalinist, but was simply Auden's dream of a puissant redeemer.

Absence of fear in Gerhart Meyer
From the sea, the truly strong man.

The Truly Strong Man, the Airman, the Tall Unwounded Leader/ Of Doomed Companions—he occurs and recurs throughout Auden's younger work, forever changing form but always retaining the magic power to convert fear into peace. A tall white god landing from an open boat, a laconic war-bitten captain, the Truly Strong Man is a passive homosexual's dream of equitable domination. He is the authentic figure of good in early Auden and his half-brother, the Dictator, is the authentic figure of evil, the man swifter than Syrian horses who can throw the bully of Corinth and is seeking brilliant Athens and us.

In the Strong Man's embrace Auden achieves release from terror and a respite from his own admitted ugliness—his post-coital death at the hands of his Hellenic aggressor would appear to have a close visual resemblance to the Dying Warrior.

Acquire that flick of wrist and after strain
Relax in your darling's arms like a stone.

In this Owenesque half-rhymed couplet the schoolboy vocabulary of mutual masturbation snuggles up with dainty boldness to the image of the narrator coiled in the tall leader's massive embrace. We could be excused for assuming that Auden spent half of his most productive decade fainting dead away: he returns to the image of orgasm over and over, as the lolling bridegroom droops like a dying flower or lapses into a classic fatigue.

AUDEN'S butch hero flying fast planes or roping his weaker companions up F6 bears an ineluctable resemblance to the Aryan demigod breaking records in his BF 109 or pounding skyward at 45 degrees into the white hell of Pitz Palu. As with heterosexuals, so with homosexuals, sexual fantasizing is the mind's dreariest function. The scholars, when they finally do get started on this tack, would do well to refrain from waxing ecstatic when nosing truffles of ambiguity. Auden started supplying a sardonic critique of his physical ideal almost from the moment of its creation. All generalized desire leads to banality. Auden staved off bathos by transcendence on the one hand and by foolery on the other. It needs always to be understood that the British schoolboys of his generation saw too much homosexuality ever to think of its mere mechanism as a mystery. Auden planted an abundance of gags for the lads.

Out of the reeds like a fowl jumped the undressed German,
And Stephen signalled from the sand dunes like a wooden madman. . . .

Those were the days. Penned during his early time as a schoolmaster, frolicsome lovesick odes to the rugger team are similarly self-aware. Their presence in *Poems* edifyingly reminds us that Auden's exaltation of the third sex (soon to have its internationalism recognized by being sneeringly branded "the homintern") as a political paradigm was innocent only politically—sexually it was self-analytical to an extent that made Auden's achievement of chaste lyricism a double triumph.

In *Look, Stranger!*, the wonder book of Auden's poetry, the lyricism was carried to its height. On the one hand, there was the perfection of his abstract sweetness—*dolcezza* so neutralized that it could be sung as plighting music for lovers everywhere.

Moreover, eyes in which I learn
That I am glad to look, return
My glance every day;
And when the birth and rising sun
Waken me, I still speak with one
Who has not gone away.

On the other hand, there was a deepening admission of vulnerability, of a fateful strangeness which no amount of bravado could usher into its inheritance.

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Whispering neighbors, left and right,
Pluck us from the real delight;
And the active hands must freeze
Lonely on the separable knees.

All lust, Auden now complains, is at once informed on and suppressed: the new political forces will offer outlaws no place. Throughout *Look, Stranger!* the heterosexuals are characteristically pictured as the tireless sentries guarding those lonely roads on which lovers walk to make a tryst, unpitying soldiers

Whose sleepless presences endear
Our peace to us with a perpetual threat.

It's the threat which makes the homosexual's peace more poignant than the heterosexual's freedom, as Auden had already stated in *Poems,* XXVI:

Noises at dawn will bring
Freedom for some, but not this peace
No bird can contradict: passing, but
is sufficient now
For something fulfilled this hour,
loved or endured.

In *Look, Stranger!,* with the 30's barely half over and the big battles yet to be fought, Auden already knew that for him and his kind the new age, if it ever came, would not come easily. Love would go on being a thing of glances meeting in crowded pubs, risky whispers in lavatories, one-night stands in cheap rooms, partings on railway stations, persecution and exile. Rhetorically he still proclaims his confidence; realistically he hints at a maturing doubt; poetically he creates from this dialectic the greatest homosexual love poetry of the century. To Poem IX in *Look, Stranger!* (called "Through the Looking Glass" in *Collected Shorter Poems 1930-1944*) only Lorca's *Llando por Ignacio Sanchez Mejias* is even an approximate rival. For his compactness, for his mastery of lyricism as a driving force rather than a decoration, for his unstrained majesty of movement, Auden in this phase of his writing is without an equal. The poetry happens like an event in nature, beautiful because it can't help it.

Your would-be lover who has never come
In the great bed at midnight to your arms. . . .

Imperfect, ruggedly rounded out, and in places appearing almost uncorrected, the poem creates its effects with a monstrously skilled carelessness that is in every sense superb, as if the mere details had been left to a team of assistants and the haughty master's attention reserved for passages like

Such dreams are amorous, they are indeed:
But no one but myself is loved in these,
And time flies on above the dreamer's head
Flies on, flies on, and with your beauty flies.

How can we tell the intoxicator from the intoxicated? Lines like these are the loose scrawl of genius in its cups, the helpless, incandescent finale of Auden's meteorite making contact with the atmosphere of realism. Gorgeous fires of defeat.

But Auden's prescient withdrawal into loneliness was pained as well as plangent, as we see in the hard-edged bitterness of *Look, Stranger!,* XXVIII:

Dear, though the night is gone
The dream still haunts today
That brought us to a room,
Cavernous, lofty as
A railway terminus

In this enormous room crowded with beds, Auden's lover turns toward someone else. The clarity of the setting belongs less to Lorca's branch of surrealism than to something colder and more northern. The presiding spirits at Lorca's lament are those of Buñuel and Dali. With Auden, it's Magritte.

Poem XXX in *Look, Stranger!* starts with the famous line "August for the people and their favorite islands" and is dedicated to Christopher Isherwood. In *Collected Shorter Poems 1930-1944* it is called "Birthday Poem," and in *Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957* it does not appear at all—one of that volume's several shattering omissions. The line about the spy's career gains luminosity once we have accustomed ourselves to the close identification in Auden's mind of homosexuality with clandestine activity and all its apparatus of codes and invisible inks. There are lines between the lines of Auden's younger poems which will come to life in the mild heat of knowledge. Beginning far back in the schoolboy mythology of Mortmere, such symbolic cloak-and-dagger men as the Adversary and the Watcher in Spanish defeat all scholarly attempts to place them as political exemplars, but are easily apprehended as madly camp star turns at a drag ball. They are there to brighten the lives of secret men. As Auden wrote years later in "The Fall of Rome," all the *literati* keep an imaginary friend. Auden's artistic indulgence in the 30's vocabulary of espionage—a vocabulary which was a matter of life and death to those from whom he borrowed it—seemed then, and can still seem now, trivial beyond forgiveness. It's worth remembering, though, that Auden was in a war too, and needed to hide himself just as deep. And his war had been going on for centuries.

In his own phrase, the wicked card was dealt: in the face of totalitarianism, homosexuality was no longer a valid image for collective action. The world was not a school and adolescence was at long last over. Auden's exile began in earnest. In *New Year Letter* we learned that those hunted out of ordinary life are "wild quarry," but are granted the privilege of themselves becoming hunters—hunters of the past. *New Year Letter* is

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one of the synthetic works by which Auden accepted the responsibility of comprehending European culture—an acceptance which was to lead him in the course of time to his position as the most variously erudite poet since Goethe. The Strong Man had faded out and the Dictator was in control, leaving

Culture on all fours to greet
A butch and criminal elite

which is as clear, and personal, an image of violation as you could wish.

The innocence of young love retained its purity through knowledge, of itself and of the multiple past which justified the pluralist political dream—now solely an ideal, and more radiant for that—of the Just City.

White childhood moving like a sigh
Through the green woods unharmed in thy
Sophisticated innocence
To call thy true love to the dance.

In *Another Time,* his collection of lyrics from that period, Auden ushered in the new decade with a reiteration of his solitude:

Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for
you and me.

The sentries were still walking the ridges. During the long decade of warfare and recovery they gradually and mysteriously grew fewer and less imbued with missionary zeal. In the decade between *Another Time* and *Nones* Auden seems to have faced the fact that art has no future, only a past. Whatever Auden the person was up to, Auden the poet had begun to accept and love the world. He no longer thought of homosexuality as newness—just a permanent apartness. From *Nones* the diligent stylistic analyst will deduce that the poet's studies of the *Oxford English Dictionary* had got as far as the letter C. The lover of his poetry will find that the period of dialectical tension has come to an end. Often taken as a gratuitous glibness, Auden's later insistence that all his poetry put together had not saved a single Jew was already a plain fact. Poetry, he had said even before the 30's were over, makes nothing happen. In *Nones* there was sardonic realism about love but an idealism about it had been banished. What idealism there was was all about art, and the eternal order which art formed outside history.

As a mind, Auden curved away from the purely Germanic culture and developed a growing kinship with the all-embracing Latin one, of which he is indeed the true modern representative in English after Eliot. Despite his domicile in Austria and his involvement with German opera, his final affinity appears to have been with the thought of Valéry—whose shelf of NRF paperbacks is the closest contemporary parallel to Auden's preoccupations with the aphorism and the ideal order of creativity.

In Christianity Auden found forgiveness for sin. But to redeem the luxuriance of his early cleverness he had to work out his own cure, and as with Dante the cure was *technical.* Holding his art to be a sacrament, Dante acted out his penitence in the form of technical behavior. For the early sin of rhyming Christ's name with a dirty word he makes recompense in the *Divine Comedy* by never rhyming it with anything except itself—the only word to be so treated. The triadic symmetries of the *Divine Comedy* are a set of disciplines so strict that lyricism has no freedom to indulge itself: when it happens, it happens as a natural consequence of stating the truth. For the educated man, there is a moment of his early acquaintanceship with Dante when he realizes that all he has slowly taught himself to enjoy in poetry is everything that Dante has grown out of. A comparable moment of fear is to be had with Auden, when we understand that his slow change through the 40's entails a renunciation of the art-thrill, and that the Audenesque dazzle is forever gone. For a poet to lose such a talent would have been a misfortune. For a poet to give it up was an act of disciplined renunciation hitherto unheard of in English.

A BRIEF recapitulation of Auden's innovations in technical bravura is worth making at this point. Unlike Brecht, who wrote both *Die Moritat von Mackie Messer* and *Die Seeräuber-Jenny* in the year of Auden's first privately-printed booklet, Auden never met Kurt Weill. It is no denigration of Isherwood to say that if, of his two admired artistic types, Auden had met the Composer instead of the Novelist, modern English musical history would have been utterly transformed. As it was, Auden's talent as a lyricist was never developed: the songs for Hedli Anderson had the melody-defeating line-turnovers of ordinary poems, and his activities as a librettist—whether writing originals for Stravinsky or translating *The Magic Flute*—seem to me to be sad and frustrating in the recognizable modern English manner. Auden had command of a linear simplicity that would have suited the lyric to perfection. As it was, however, he stuck mainly to poetry: and anyway it's probable that the pressure of his homosexual indirectness would have distorted his linear simplicity as thoroughly as, and less fruitfully than, it dislocated his pictorial integrity. Alone with pencil and paper, Auden was free to explore his technical resources. They were without limit, Mozartian. Auden mastered all the traditional lyric forms as a matter of course, bringing to some of them—those which had been imported from rhyme-rich languages and for good reasons had never flourished—the only air of consummate ease they would ever possess. At the same time he did a far more thorough job than even *vers libre* had done of breaking down the last vestiges of the artificial

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grip the lyric still had on the written poem. He produced apprehensible rhythmic unities which were irregular not only from line to line but within the lines themselves. Finally he penetrated within the word, halting its tendency toward slur and contraction, restoring its articulated rhythmic force: this is the technical secret behind his ability to sustain the trimeter and tetrameter over long distances, driving them forward not along a fixed lattice-work of terminal and internal rhymes but with an incessant modulation across the vowel spectrum and the proliferating concatenated echoes of exploded consonantal groups.

Hazlitt said that Burke's style was as forked and playful as the lightning, crested like the serpent. Everybody sensitive to poetry, I think, has known the feeling that Auden's early work, with its unmatched technical brilliance, is an enchanted playground. The clear proof of his moral stature, in my view, is that he left the playground behind when all were agreed that he had only to keep on adding to it and immortality would be his.

Auden's later books are a long—and sometimes long-winded—penitence for the heretical lapse of letting art do his thinking for him. In *Homage to Clio, About the House, City without Walls,* and *Epistle to a Godson* he fulfills his aim of suppressing all automatic responses. A blend of meters and syllables, his austere forms progressively empty themselves of all mesmeric flair. Auden conquers Selfhood by obliterating talent: what is left is the discipline of mechanical accomplishment, supporting the salt conclusions of a lifetime's thinking—cured wisdom. At the same time, Auden claimed the right to erase any of his early works he now thought were lies. A generation's favorites fell before his irascible, Tolstoyan scythe. His friend Louis MacNeice had once written that after a certain time the poet loses the right to get his finished poems back. Auden didn't agree with MacNeice's humility, just as he had never agreed with MacNeice's sense of usefulness: MacNeice had tired himself out serving the BBC instead of the Muse.

It is a common opinion among the English *literati* that Auden's later work is a collapse. I am so far from taking this view that I think an appreciation of Auden's later work is the only sure test for an appreciation of Auden, just as an appreciation of Yeats's earlier work is the only sure test for an appreciation of Yeats. You must know and admire the austerity which Auden achieved before you can take the full force of his early longing for that austerity—before you can measure the portent of his early brilliance. There is no question that the earlier work is more enjoyable. The question is about whether you think enjoyability was the full extent of his aim. Auden, it seems to me, is a modern artist who has lived out his destiny as a European master to the full, a man in whom all cultural history is present just as the sufferings of all the past were still alive in his lover's eyes:

> *A look contains the history of Man,*
> *And fifty francs will earn the stranger right*
> *To warm the heartless city in his arms.*

Famed stranger and exalted outcast, Auden served a society larger than the one in which he hid. In his later work we see not so much the ebbing of desire as its transference to the created world, until plains and hills begin explaining the men who live on them. Auden's unrecriminating generosity toward a world which had served him ill was a moral triumph. Men who try to understand it too quickly ought not to be trusted with grown-up books.

I was born the month after Auden wrote "September 1, 1939" and saw him only three times. The first time, in Cambridge, about five years ago, he gave a poetry reading in Great St. Mary's. The second time, on the Cambridge-to-London train a year later, I was edging along to the buffet car when I noticed him sitting in a first-class compartment. When the train pulled in I waited for him at the barrier and babbled some nonsense about being privileged to travel on the same train. He took it as his due and waved one of his enormous hands. The third time was earlier this year, in the Martini Lounge atop New Zealand House in London, where a reception was thrown for all of us who had taken part in the Poetry International Festival. Auden shuffled through in a suit encrusted with the dirt of years—it was a geological deposit, or else an archaeological pile-up like the seven cities of Troy. I don't think anybody of my generation knew what to say to him. I know I didn't. But we knew what to think, and on behalf of my contemporaries I have tried to write some of it down here. I can still remember those unlucky hands; one of them holding a cigarette, the other holding a brimming glass, and both trembling. The mind boggled at some of the things they had been up to. But one of them had refurbished the language. A few months later he was beyond passion, having gone to the reward which Dante says that poets who have done their duty might well enjoy—talking shop as they walk beneath the moon.

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Men, Women, and the Parental Imperative

David Gutmann

"BEWARE of the man who praises liberated women; he is planning to quit his job." Thus, Erica Jong in a recent poem. And indeed most men who have written on the women's movement in recent years have come not to bury but to praise it, if anything outdoing women in the denunciation of male chauvinism and sexism; the literature of self-flagellation that has accumulated up till now would be enough to justify a theory of masochism as an essential male trait. The sharp attacks on men launched by radical feminists have so far been answered, when they have been answered at all, mainly by women.

Achilles, however, may finally have begun to mutter in his tent. Two books have recently appeared by male authors, both undertaking to demolish the logical, philosophical, and evidential bases of radical feminism: *The Inevitability of Patriarchy,* by Steven Goldberg,* a sociologist who teaches at the City University of New York, and *Sexual Suicide,* by George Gilder,† a political scientist, author, and liberal Republican activist. Two books are a small sample of the potential "masculinist" counterattack to Women's Liberation, but a review of their arguments will give as good an idea as any of sentiments in the silent male majority. Then, too, an examination of the counterattack may provide insight into the nature of the original provocation, and hence into the real agenda in the current argument between the sexes.

In its own way each of the two books is angry, and appropriately enough each deals with the topic of male aggression, with particular emphasis on the consequences for women when they provoke that aggression. Both authors agree that the male endowment of aggressive energy is biologically rooted; that it is a major pivot of sex distinctions; and that it is a critical issue for societies and individuals. The authors disagree when it comes to predicting the forms that male aggression will take in response to the feminist challenge.

Of the two books, Steven Goldberg's is by far the more tightly organized. Presenting himself as the spokesman of intractable reality, Goldberg vents his anger by remaining at all times icily logical, refusing to indulge any conclusion that cannot be supported by powerful evidence, and an airtight deductive chain. (His obsessively rigorous style is in itself a rebuke to the more self-indulgent of the feminist rhetoricians.)Most of his book is devoted to citing and then carefully picking apart all possible counter-arguments to his essentially simple position, which is that men have a larger natural endowment of aggression than women, an endowment that leads them in all societies to control the dominant positions in any undertaking or institution that carries prestige. Goldberg's thesis is buttressed by two major lines of evidence, anthropological and biological. Referring to data from some four thousand distinct cultures, Goldberg finds not a single instance in which patriarchy is absent, in which male dominance is undone, or in which males do not strive to attain the positions accorded prestige by men and women alike. This cultural evidence is matched by the biological findings of clear male advantage with regard to the neuro-endocrine systems that fuel human aggression. The human or sub-human male animal has—at least during the reproductive years—a much greater supply than the female of the hormones that energize aggressive behavior, and the male's hyper-sensitivity to these substances is laid down in infancy by testicular secretions that promote early maturation of the special brain structures which mediate between the male hormones and outward behavior.

Thus, Goldberg maintains, males are more aggressive, not because they have been encouraged to play with war toys and discouraged from playing with dolls; rather, male aggression is the outcome of a successful evolutionary program: males are more combative because they are more expendable. While aggression can take many forms—warfare, competitive sports, intellectual disputation, chess—varying by culture, by social context, and by position in the individual life cycle, men have in common the readiness to fight for leadership, and while they may not possess a greater store of innate talent, their natural am-

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* Morrow, 256 pp., $6.95.

† Quadrangle, 308 pp., $7.95.

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bition will insure their dominance over women, as over passive males, in any prestigious and non-domestic enterprise. Yet men do not reach for the heights in order to oppress women. As Goldberg sees it, men are driven to excel not by male chauvinism or by sexist cultural requirements, but by the clear imperatives of their specific biological "program," a program that is every bit as oppressive—perhaps more so, since it has so often led to early death in battle—as that reserved for women.

Goldberg insists that a culture can survive only if it takes account of fundamental sex differences in formulating the spoken and unspoken expectations that govern socialization and the rules of propriety for each sex. Cultural norms which discourage women from entering high-prestige occupations have not been designed as an instrument of oppression but as a way of saving them from inevitable defeat at the hands of fiercer and physically stronger men. Goldberg does not feel that all women should be penned in the kitchen; but he is against the attempt to cut the majority of women off from their best options. He is appalled by the current feminist attack on the traditional competences of women—those having to do with the domestic spheres, the nurture of children, and the regulation of the emotional aspects of living. In these domains men have typically felt inferior, intimidated by women, while women have drawn a sense of significance and identity from mastering them. Women's Liberation may create a feminine elite able to compete on even terms with men, but it will leave the majority of women with nowhere to go. He ends:

> . . . the evidence indicates that women [should] follow their own physiological imperatives and not choose to compete for the goals that men devote their lives to attaining. Women have more important things to do. Men are aware of this and that is why in this and every other society they look to women for gentleness, kindness, and love, for refuge from a world of pain and force, for safety from their own excesses. In every society a basic male motivation is that women and children must be protected. But the feminist cannot have it both ways: if she wishes to sacrifice all this, all that she will get in return is the right to meet men on male terms. She will lose.

Goldberg's virtues as a scholar and logician are formidable. It must be said, however, that they may also constitute a kind of fault, in that they lead him to overlook some of the deepest, though less easily measurable, sources of male aggression, particularly those buried in the emotional and sexual lives both of individuals and of entire cultures. George Gilder's book, *Sexual Suicide*—openly angry, subjective, and polemical, may in some ways come closer to the truth, at least with respect to the paths male energies might follow in a society dominated by feminist principles.

WHILE Gilder agrees that male aggression is a potentially dangerous force that must be tamed, aggression itself is for him qualitatively different from what it is for Goldberg. Gilder sees aggression not as a relatively discrete and boundaried social-scientific variable, located within the individual human unit, bonded to the neuro-endocrine systems, and constant and fixed in its goals, but rather as something at once more protean and more diffuse: it is a potential for human relatedness; it is also an aspect of male sexuality; and it is shaped by the intense encounters which it stimulates. Gilder's main point—and here I think his insight goes deeper than Goldberg's—is that male sexuality and aggression in the forms that they usually take are not the inflexible products of a biological drive but are reciprocal to the sexuality of women. The male goals that Goldberg ascribes to biology Gilder would ascribe to the mutual regulation of men and women. Thus, male striving for patriarchy and dominance is not inevitable, but rather represents a disciplining and focusing of male aggression, in large part sponsored by women, toward socially productive uses.

For Gilder, man is not a natural patriarch. Left to himself, "to the normal circuits of male sexuality," man—perhaps like the primitive hunter—alternates between ferocity and apathy, raping, hacking, and boozing one day, then sleeping it off until his rising lust for mayhem and fornication drive him into action again. (Whereas Goldberg's vision of patriarchal man seems to be mainly based on anthropological reports from stable—if preliterate and primitive—societies, where male dominance may reflect the outcome of collaboration rather than competition between men and women, Gilder's model of "natural" man seems to be abstracted from disorganized societies—from the inner-city ghettos, the shanty-town *barrios* and *favellas,* the urban fringes of Indian reservations, all those environments in which the bases of male attainment have been undercut, where men are "castrated" by social circumstances and by their women's contempt, and where they have slouched off and left the women to raise the children they have aimlessly fathered.) Gilder, in other words, shares with some feminists the view that men are naturally bums; but unlike the feminists, he believes that it is women's mission, consistent with their self-interest, to civilize men, to subordinate "male short-term interests and psychology to the long-term interests of female biology"—a biology that is organized toward the raising of viable children.

In Gilder's view, men are not imperial animals (to use the phrase of Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox); to the contrary, they are extremely vulnerable to women's judgment of their sexual

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performance, and they are mortified by the all-important role of women in procreation. They can maintain their sexual potency and tame their wild aggression only if women give them a great deal of compensatory recognition. Women have to convince men that they have a vital and unique role, as protectors and providers, in procreation and child-rearing. They must also validate the male need to set up exclusively masculine wild-life preserves—politics, warfare, sports, secret societies—in which men can build up their threatened self-regard. And since what preserves the male ultimately preserves the female, women must also concede the prestige of such "sexist" business: they must honor and admire superior male performance in activities that largely exclude women. If women fail to validate the more restrained and bourgeois versions of masculinity, then domesticity itself will become a threat and men will fall back to seeking their manhood in the barroom, in drunken, murderous brawls, in casual sex, and in the kind of work—in mines, ships, and lumber camps—that takes them far from family and fatherhood. Feminists have claimed that unisex, and the breakdown of sex distinction in marriage, will "liberate" men and turn them into tender comrades and lovers—mother and father rolled into one; instead, Gilder asserts, unisex will bring about more and more of the *truly* exploitative male types who are already filling the urban world today—the ambisexual rapists, pimps, and junkies. He describes the options available to man in a society in which women no longer provide them with the incentive to curb their aggression:

> Under these conditions, males find it increasingly difficult to observe long-term erotic horizons. Their sex lives become increasingly oriented toward the next conquest of a tempting body, and because their social and work motivations are so profoundly intertwined with their sexuality, they find their commitment to their jobs and communities also eroding. The emergence of impulsive male patterns leads to adoption of a general pattern of hedonistic opportunism and impulsiveness. Where social patterns offer a plausible opportunity, the men will turn to short-circuit pursuits of crime and drugs. Other men may immerse themselves in the vicarious male rituals of TV football and violence, bombard their minds with the macho rhythms and incantations of high-volume rock, or fuel their vanities with alcohol, immediate sex, and pornography. The commitment to work and community dissolves as the commitment to female sexual horizons declines.

In Gilder's view this outcome, when it becomes the norm for men, represents social catastrophe; fornication may actually increase in volume but all the *civilized* deployments of male sex and aggression—toward the protection of women and children, toward productive labor—will be undone. The result is the "Sexual-Suicide Society," one that will brutalize men and oppress women far beyond anything that either now endure.

Feminists will undoubtedly be enraged by Gilder's ideas, seeing them as a form of blackmail, bitter confirmation of what they have all along been maintaining is the male attitude toward women: "Adore me or I'll kill you." Similarly, Gilder's praise of women as a civilizing force will be seen as a piece of Victorian hypocrisy designed to flatter women into loving their chains. Interestingly enough, however, the tone if not the message of Gilder's book is close—certainly closer than Goldberg's—to the feminist literature he deplores. Like the feminists, Gilder has an ambivalent if not a downright low opinion of men, and he agrees with them that male morale requires much female self-effacement. Like them, too, Gilder judges every instance of social practice by its quotient of "sexism": does it or does it not support clear sex differences, the prestige and dignity of the bourgeois male life style? And like the feminists, but of course taking the opposite side, he believes that one is either part of the solution or part of the problem. Thus, if equal pay for equal work without regard to sex undercuts the prestige of men as breadwinners, then Gilder is against it; similarly with the Pill, Aid to Dependent Children, and the Open Marriage. These are all aspects of sexual suicide.

In sum, to the feminist claim that male aggression is not authentic, that, since there are no *intrinsic* differences between the sexes, it is only social pressure which artificially inflates male, and reduces female, aggression, both Steven Goldberg and George Gilder answer with a single voice: the superior male endowment of aggression is natural and intrinsic, and women should be careful not to become the rivals of men. In Goldberg's view, if women enter into rivalry men will simply continue to pursue the material and symbolic rewards of their culture and the women will inevitably be beaten down. Gilder, on the other hand, believes that in the face of female rivalry men will abandon the status struggle without at the same time giving up their aggression, which will erupt in the more dangerous and primitive forms of violent crime and brutal or exploitative sex. But whatever the nature and course of male aggression, Goldberg and Gilder agree that it cannot simply be legislated out of existence. Men will sooner agree with the feminists that they are brutal oppressors than admit that they are paper tigers.

II

The books of Goldberg and Gilder, quite apart from the cogency of the arguments they present, have about them the air of a sibling quarrel, in which the threatened older brother is trying to convince his tomboy

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sister that boys are really *much* tougher than girls. The older brothers are right; feminists can trot out endless pictures of lady black-belts, and *guerrilleras* posed soulfully with their assault rifles, but the case for murderous aggression as a male prerogative—at least among younger men—has always been clear. This, if you will, is the chauvinism of reality. Nevertheless, there is something askew about this particular argument between men and women as it has been conducted thus far, and especially as Goldberg and Gilder address it, and that something has precisely to do with the concentration by both sides to the debate on a single age group, young adults. We shall never be able to understand sex differences in a true light unless we consider events across the total life cycle, and not merely in the narrow time frame represented by early adulthood.

I mean in what follows to put forward some notions about the evolutionary basis of sex differences, and sex-role changes over the life cycle, that I have come to in the course of carrying out comparative cross-cultural studies in the psychology of middle age and aging. These field studies have occupied me for the last nine years, and have involved intensive interviews with younger, middle-aged, and older men (and some women) from traditional, rural, subsistence societies: the Navajo of Arizona, the Mayan Indians of Mexico, and the Druze of the Galilee and Golan Heights. The data gathered from these studies have been compared with data from earlier studies of urban, middle-majority Americans.

Let me begin by reviewing briefly the general cross-cultural trends, particularly those that shed light on aggression, dependency, and submissiveness. It is clear that sex differences in regard to these controversial traits are sharpest among younger adults and those in early middle age. In contrast to women—and in contrast to older men—younger men across diverse cultures tend to be competitive and, if necessary, combative, but in a manner focused toward disciplined productivity and achievement. Particularly during the period of early parenthood, younger men strive to create and control the sources of security for themselves and their dependents: they work very hard to increase their flocks, fields, harvests, or business clienteles; and they do not indulge the passive yearnings for comfort and pleasure that might interfere with their perseverance in their assigned or chosen work. Apparently, young men repress all the extremes of their nature —both their murderousness and their passivity —in response to the experience of marriage and parenthood. Again and again, across a variety of settings, younger husbands report that they had behaved wildly as bachelors but were reformed by marriage and fatherhood.

The vulnerability and helplessness of infants and young children seem to arouse a sense of chronic emergency in parents even under relatively affluent conditions, and fathers and mothers respond to this sense of emergency in sex-specific ways. Thus, the young father forces even more deeply into his psychic underground the receptive sensuality that might be distracting to him in his instrumental role, and hence potentially lethal to his children. These dangerous promptings are also handled by giving them over to an indulged and dependent wife, and by living them out vicariously through her; the wife becomes an external representation of the "passive" yearnings her husband must give up in order to provide for his family. By the same token the wife concedes to her husband—and figuratively sends out of the house with him—the aggression that might be deadly, in the emotional and even in the physical sense, to her vulnerable offspring. The standard reaction for each sex is to surrender to the other the qualities that might interfere with the provision of its own special form of security. Men, the providers of physical security, give up the sensual dependency that might inhibit their courage and endurance; and women, the providers of emotional security, give up the aggression that might frighten or hurt a vulnerable and needful child. The aggressive male role is hence not some nasty, male-chauvinist invention; it is a way of getting male *and* female aggression out of the community, away from the children, by deploying it, through men, against outer enemies or natural challenges.

The connection of sex differences to parenthood becomes clearer when we consider the sex-role reversals that take place in middle-age, as children grow up and take over the responsibility of providing for their own security. As the sense of parental emergency fades, both sexes can afford the luxury of living out the potentials they had to relinquish in the service of their particular task. A massive involution takes place in which men begin to live out directly—to own, as part of themselves—the passivity, sensuality, and tenderness, in effect, the "femininity," that was previously repressed in the service of productive instrumentality. By the same token, we find (again, across a vast range of societies) the opposite effect in women, who generally become domineering, independent, and unsentimental in late middle life. Just as men reclaim title to their denied "femininity," women repossess the aggressive "masculinity" that they once lived out vicariously through their husbands. The consequence of this internal revolution is that the sharp sex distinctions of earlier adulthood break down, each sex becomes to some degree what the other used to be, and there is ushered in the normal unisex of later life: Grandpa becomes sweet, affable, but rather vague, Grandma becomes tough-minded and intrusive.

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Goldberg's model, then, of imperial, patriarchal man is valid mainly for the periods of young and middle adulthood. Beginning at about age fifty, patriarchy is no longer inevitable; indeed, an anthropologist who confined his attention to the periods of middle and old age might well write a book entitled *The Inevitability of Matriarchy*. In the latter half of life women in many cultures take over some of the drive toward dominance and prestige that according to Goldberg is the exclusive hallmark of the male. Men tame the extremes of their nature and push toward achievement and social distinction mainly during their younger years, starting at the time when they first come under the influence of a woman and her procreative design (this suggests the essential correctness of Gilder's interactionist model of male psychology).Women, on the other hand, tend in this period to identify with and admire male strength, and they thereby give their husbands good reason to direct that strength toward achievement and production, rather than toward mayhem. But with their children grown, wives become less needful and admiring of male assertion and readier to own and recognize such energy in themselves. Aging husbands are freed in turn to recline into the passive version of "short-term" male sexuality; their children no longer stand to be hurt by such passivity, and their aggressive potential is so biologically reduced that even its most primitive expression cannot threaten society as a whole.

Of course, older women never acquire the truly murderous charge of aggression that is biologically available to younger men, but—as witness Golda Meir, Indira Gandhi, and the widowed Eleanor Roosevelt—they have about all that they need. They are usually tougher than their middle-aged husbands; and they are much bolder than their younger selves. The "liberation" of women then comes about normally through the fixed sequence of the life cycle, when it is without detriment to children or society. In effect, as Jung put it, "the second half of life is compensatory for the first."

III

The life-cycle perspective reveals an evolutionary plan, a species shape within individual lives; and it thereby points up the deficiencies in both the "masculinist" and the feminist thinking about sex roles. From our particular masculine or feminist perspective we may each of us feel cheated of some bounty that the other sex seems to enjoy: men complain that they are not allowed to cry, and women rage because they are not allowed to hit, and each sex covertly or openly blames the other for having appropriated the missing benefit. But as individuals we are all finally part of a species, products of evolutionary sequences that long predate our individuality and our particular social situation. Much of what we impute to individual psychology or cultural circumstances is in fact the expression (or the derailment) of a species design.

Although current psychological theories treat us as if we had no evolutionary past or future, we are all of us to a greater or lesser degree the agents of a species purpose, which is the raising of viable children—children who can in their turn rear viable children. Sex roles cannot be viewed from private perspectives, as impositions on individual freedom. Socialization by sex may oppress women, but it also oppresses men, who surrender a large part of their inner potential to the service of their assigned role. Sex roles and sex differences are not finally aspects of the male imperative or the female imperative; they are aspects of the parental imperative, arrangements for the providing of physical and emotional security to vulnerable children. And indeed, it is around this matter of parenthood that the species "business" intersects with individual satisfaction. Most adults in most societies still derive their unquestioned sense of life's meaning from their role as parents of growing children.

No doubt the sense of a parental imperative was more urgent in both men and women when the average life condition was one of hardship and danger, and no doubt that urgency has receded the more affluent we have become and the more the job of providing physical (and even emotional) security has been taken over by apparently stable social institutions. Lacking the sense of clear and present danger, we find less and less rationale for the sex differences that impose so much inner restriction on young adults of both sexes. As the sense of emergency ebbs, the privatist critiques of sex distinctions—indulged by men as well as by women—come to seem more justified, and we are increasingly tempted to undo them in favor of unisex. Women put aside cosmetics and bras, wear jeans, and go off in search of their manhood. Young men wear their hair long, put on beads, and cultivate their sensitivity and receptivity.*

The final returns on unisex and "liberation" are not in, but we should not be surprised to find that, as in so many other areas, today's liberation can be tomorrow's oppression. It has been our fate in recent years to discover that when we

* It should be noted that the women's movement did not initiate unisex, but was rather a response to it; young men of the affluent classes had already been actively exploring unisex life styles by the time the women's movement reached its flash point in the mid-60's. Though feminists complain of male oppression in order to legitimate their own strident rage, and in order to align themselves with Third World politics, their real complaint has been with male irresponsibility—with the fact that urban American men have been becoming more interested in seeking than in providing security, and have not been far-sighted enough to justify the submission that they continue to require of their women.

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tamper with long established ecological arrangements—even those which oppress other humans—we set off unpredicted and sometimes disastrous sequences. Sex distinctions may or may not have arisen, in some far-off time, in reaction to outer necessity and danger, conditions which have now (temporarily?) diminished; but in any case we do not know how much of our inner psychic constitution is still predicated on them. Legs are no longer vitally necessary in the age of automobiles, but a crippled child still feels maimed. Similarly, we do not know, although we may soon find out, to what degree our own or our children's psychic health is predicated on a clear sense of sexual identity, and the presence in the home of two parents, each of whom stands for, and takes pleasure in, a distinct sexual nature.

The feminists assure us that liberation for women *must* bring liberation for men and children as well. This is Ms. Pangloss talking: it would be a unique event in human history if the liberation of one group were not bought at the expense of another. Women's Liberation may conceivably free men to live tax-exempt lives as bachelors in the "open marriage," but what will be the consequence for children when the usual sex distinctions in marriage are supplanted by unisex, when what is in effect a post-parental condition, normal for later life, is inserted directly into the pivotal years of young parenthood?

For years now—in Feiffer cartoons, in Albee plays, in *New Yorker* stories, in clinical reports—we have had chronicled for us the lives of upper-middle-class Wasp and Jewish families of the sort that the radical feminists advocate, and the results should give everyone pause. For these are precisely the families—characterized by the domineering mother and the "weak or absent" father—that have generated such a high proportion of today's psychiatric casualties, the drop-outs, drug-heads, and religious freaks. Too many of these families, in which the normal family life cycle has been inverted, send forth their children, full of need, to turn to chemicals, liquor, anonymous sex, and charismatic but totalitarian leaders for the kind of psychic supplies they never found in their parents—or in themselves. Where males are concerned, unisex and "liberation" may already have brought about not the Greening, but the Graying, of America: those strangely geriatric young men who have become by now a recognizable and familiar type, especially on the nation's campuses—boys who have the fists and gonads of youth but also the petulance of old men.

When parents indulge premature unisex, and become in effect the grandparents of their own children, the result may be children who are in the psychological sense pre-senile. These may be the first casualties of the open, unisex, family. Before we decide to blunder ahead on that path we would be well advised to relearn the lessons of the parental imperative and to ask ourselves what they mean for our time, and our circumstances.

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Images of Einstein

Jeffrey Marsh

ALBERT EINSTEIN is probably the only 20th-century scientist whose name would be recognized by a majority of the population. This is, of course, a strong indictment of scientific education in an age of science, but there is a rough justice in it, because Einstein was, beyond doubt, the greatest scientist of the era. His greatness was acknowledged by his scientific peers before World War I, and he achieved overnight public fame immediately after the war with the experimental confirmation of the general theory of relativity. In the succeeding half century, countless books and articles on the man and his theories have been written, both popular and technical, but the full picture of Einstein's impact remains to be told.

In the last two years, three books have been published which attempt to take the measure of the man from the present vantage point, eighteen years after his death and almost seven decades since his first epochal contributions burst upon the world. One of the books is a full-scale biography by Ronald W. Clark,* a professional biographer of science, who attempts not only to comment on Einstein's work but also to relate in great detail the story of his long life, both as private citizen and public figure. The other two are less ambitious, aiming mainly to convey the outline of his major contributions to physics and to give some idea of Einstein the man. Of these, one is written by the physicist Jeremy Bernstein,† known for his urbane articles on scientific topics in the *New Yorker*, and is a volume in the "Modern Masters" series; the other is by Banesh Hoffman, in collaboration with Helen Dukas.** Mr. Hoffman is a well-known popularizer of science, a mathematician and one-time assistant of Einstein, while Miss Dukas was Einstein's secretary and is literary trustee of his estate.

I

THE basic story of Einstein's life is easily sketched. He was born in Ulm in 1879, but his family moved to Munich while he was still a baby. Though he appeared to be a slow developer, not learning to speak until he was three years old, as a young child he developed a passionate interest in the phenomena of the physical world, and by the time he entered his teens he had acquired a thirst for mathematical knowledge, as well as a precocious taste for Kant. When his father's business failed and the family transplanted itself to Milan, the fifteen-year-old Einstein, temperamentally unsuited to the rigid atmosphere of 19th-century Germany in general, and to that of his *gymnasium* in particular, rebelled against being left behind to finish high school. Joining his family in Italy, he enlisted his father's help in renouncing his German nationality. Without a high-school diploma, he took the entrance examination for the Zurich Polytechnic, but failed in the general subjects, although he did well in the mathematical part; after a year's further study in the free atmosphere of a progressive Swiss high school he was able to enter the Polytechnic.

Once again, he failed to fit in with a rigid academic environment; though he studied physics intensively on his own, he relied on the lecture notes taken by a more diligent fellow student to pass his examinations. By the time he graduated in 1900, he had made such a negative impression that he was unable to find any reasonable academic post, much less one at the Polytechnic itself. He had to scratch around for various temporary teaching jobs until he was able in 1901 to obtain a position in the Swiss Patent Office in Berne, this time through the help of a friend's well-placed father. About a year later he married Mileva Maric, a Serbian girl who had been a classmate of his. Isolated from any contact with professional physicists, and able to discuss his ideas only with a group of philosophically inclined friends, Einstein set about his scientific work in the time not taken up by his duties in the patent office or by his growing family responsibilities.

In 1905 he published four papers. One of these was his doctoral dissertation, concerned with the diffusion of sugar molecules in solution; the other three were his explanation of Brownian motion, his explanation of the photoelectric effect via the quantum concept, and his introduction to the theory of special relativity. The production of three such significant pieces of work in one year was the most astonishing feat performed by any physicist since a similar period two-hundred-forty years earlier when Newton had discovered the dispersion of light by a prism, invented the calculus, formulated his laws of motion, and discovered his law of gravitation.

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* *Einstein: The Life and Times,* World. 718 pp., $15.00.

† *Einstein,* Viking, 242 pp., $6.95.

** *Albert Einstein: Creator and Rebel,* Viking, 272 pp., $8.95.

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In the following years, Einstein published further developments of these themes, and his name became well known among a select group of physicists of the highest ability, but not until 1908 was he to obtain even the minor academic post of *privatdozent* at Berne University. That same year, the noted mathematician, Minkowski, who had been one of the Zurich professors singularly unimpressed by Einstein the student, made a major address highlighting the significance of relativity. By 1909, Einstein was sufficiently well recognized to be awarded an honorary doctorate at the 350th anniversary celebrations of the University of Geneva, together with Marie Curie and others of similar eminence; when he gave an invited paper at a scientific meeting in Salzburg, he found himself for the first time in the company of world-class physicists.

During the next five years, his rise was meteoric; he was appointed professor at the University of Zurich, where he stayed only a year and a half before moving to Prague. A year later, he returned once more to Zurich, this time to the Polytechnic, thus fulfilling an old ambition. In 1913 he was offered, and could not refuse, a position at the pinnacle of world science, as director of the newly established Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Physics in Berlin and a full member of the Prussian Academy of Sciences, with no teaching or other official duties to interfere with his research.

The outbreak of World War I, soon after Einstein's arrival in Berlin, was greeted by a famous manifesto, signed by ninety-three of Germany's leading intellectuals, which loudly and belligerently asserted the correctness of Germany's activities in the war. A counter-manifesto, opposing the war and calling for a united Europe, was signed by Einstein and three others.

Isolated in his position, Einstein nevertheless made no secret of his pacifist views, though he was more circumspect in expressing his hopes for a German defeat, which he voiced on his visits to neutral Switzerland. His researches on relativity culminated in the publication of his General Theory in 1916; in 1917 he returned to the quantum theory and published a new derivation of the Planck formula of 1901—of which more below—in which he formulated the idea of stimulated emission of radiation, a concept that more than forty years later would produce the laser.

Early in 1919, Einstein was divorced. His wife and two sons had been in Zurich since before the war; the marriage had not been a happy one, although the couple parted on good terms, and his wife retained her famous married name and was even given the money to come from a Nobel prize which was not to be awarded him for another three years. A few months later, Einstein married his widowed cousin Elsa, who had taken care of him during a serious illness in wartime. This year did not mark a change in his personal status alone. The predictions made in his 1916 paper had aroused much interest in England, and preparations had been made for an astronomical expedition to test them during the eclipse of 1919. When the results of the expedition were released, the long established Newtonian picture of the world had been replaced by that of Einstein, who became world-famous overnight on a scale unmatched before or since by any other scientist.

While before this date Einstein's signing of the 1914 anti-war manifesto marked an unusual departure from his immersion in the world of physics, he now took on a public role. He was an outspoken supporter of pacifism, campaigner for international cooperation, and a champion of the Weimar republic. He had also become a convinced Zionist, and in 1921 visited the U.S. together with Chaim Weizmann to publicize the movement and to raise funds. He had a particular interest in the Hebrew University, where he gave the inaugural address in 1923. All these activities served to make him a focus of nationalist and anti-Semitic attack at home, as a symbol of the alien forces that were said to be keeping Germany from attaining its proper position in the world.

As the 20's passed, Einstein spent his time trying to generalize his theories still further by formulating a unified field theory that would include electromagnetism as well as gravitation, developing one branch of quantum statistical mechanics, and arguing against the "Copenhagen interpretation" of quantum mechanics. Yet while he was hailed in the outside world, his position in Germany was never secure, and by the early 30's Einstein had arranged to spend part of his working time outside Germany. He was to pass a segment of each year in residence at Oxford, a segment in Pasadena at the California Institute of Technology, and the rest in Berlin. He was at Caltech in 1933, when Hitler came to power. He wasted no time in publicly announcing that he would not return to Germany. After short stays in Belgium and England, he accepted a position at the newly established Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, his taste for Caltech having soured as a result of disputes over remuneration* and opposition to his presence voiced by conservative alumni and contributors who disapproved of his radical reputation.

In Princeton, Einstein settled down. Becoming a widower in 1936, he continued his search for a unified field theory, and made his last notable contributions to the debate over quantum mechanics. Having abandoned pacifism with Hitler's accession to power, he urged collective action against Nazi Germany, and used whatever personal influence he had to help refugees from Europe reestablish themselves.

In the 30's, nuclear physics had advanced by leaps and bounds, its study being mainly carried out by physicists a generation younger than Einstein. In 1939, the uranium nucleus had been split in Berlin, and physicists in Western Europe became aware of the possibility of producing an atom bomb. News of this possibility spread rapidly via refugee scientists to the U.S., where two such

* Still, he had to be persuaded to accept a salary of $15,000 at the Institute rather than the $3,000 he himself suggested.

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refugees, Leo Szilard and Eugene Wigner, informed Einstein of the potential import of the new developments. They persuaded him to write a letter to President Roosevelt drawing his attention to the possibility that a bomb could be built, and pointing out that the Germans were probably also aware of the possibility. This letter led to the establishment of a committee to study the prospects of building a bomb; progress was slow and Einstein later wrote another letter to urge more speed. Apart from this early advocacy, Einstein played no part in the Manhattan Project itself, partly because of a concern for security on the part of leading figures in the project who were unaware of his role in initiating it. However, he did serve as a technical consultant to the navy on problems involving conventional explosives.

After the war, with the menace of Nazism removed from the scene, Einstein returned to his traditional concern with the problem of avoiding war, now buttressing his arguments by appealing to the dangers inherent in the existence of nuclear weapons. Though his health was failing, he continued his search for a unified field theory while remaining a public figure. After Weizmann's death in 1952, he was offered the presidency of Israel, but declined, citing his temperamental unsuitability and physical frailty. His final public activities included preparing a statement on Israel's seventh anniversary, and signing a declaration, originated by Bertrand Russell, which led to the establishment of the Pugwash movement, dedicated to the problems of world peace and limiting nuclear weapons.

II

A MEASURE of the greatness of Einstein's achievements is that they cannot be described without first summarizing the history of physics since Sir Isaac Newton. Newton's law of motion explained how, given a knowledge of the forces acting on a body and its initial position and velocity, its future motion could be predicted completely; his law of universal gravitation described the fundamental force acting in the universe. For the next two hundred years, one of the major tasks of physicists and mathematicians was applying Newton's laws to ever more complicated situations, and reformulating these laws in ever more abstract fashion.

Gravitation was not the only force which was known to exist, however, and by the middle of the 19th century the second great triumph of classical physics had been achieved by Maxwell, who was able to formulate a set of equations which unified the laws of electricity and magnetism previously discovered by Faraday, Ampère, and other experimenters. The most outstanding results of Maxwell's theory were the identification of light as a form of electromagnetic radiation, and the prediction that other forms of this radiation should exist, a prediction whose fruition gave the world radio and television.

But Newton's mechanics and Maxwell's electromagnetism were not enough by themselves to explain the behavior of matter, because the sheer magnitude of the number of molecules present in even the smallest macroscopic quantity of matter made it impossible to perform the calculations necessary to solve the equations involved. Statistical mechanics was developed in the last third of the 19th century, most notably by Boltzmann and Gibbs, to make this application possible and to provide a fundamental explanation of the laws of thermodynamics, which had been empirically discovered by engineers. With the synthesis of mechanics, electromagnetism, and statistical mechanics, physicists were able to set about their program of explaining the workings of the physical world.

The heyday of classical physics was short. By the end of the 19th century, a number of problems were seen which defied solution in terms of an otherwise eminently successful theory. By the time these problems had been solved, about the middle of the 1920's, physics had passed through two revolutions, and the Newtonian view of the world had been superseded. The first revolution was brought about almost singlehandedly by Einstein, with his special and general theories of relativity; by rejecting those of Newton's axioms which asserted the absolute nature of time and space, he was able to reconcile contradictions between classical mechanics and electromagnetism which had become inescapable, and thereby to bring a new unity to the description of the physical world. The second revolution, made necessary by the failure of classical theory to account for many phenomena occurring on an atomic scale, culminated in the mid-1920's when a new picture of the world emerged with the development of quantum mechanics—a development that was helped immeasurably by the major contributions made by Einstein to the old quantum theory which preceded it.

According to traditional Newtonian ideas, two people moving with respect to each other, who measure the velocity of the same object, should obtain different results, as indeed they do in general. Experiment shows, however, that no matter how fast we are moving, we always find the same value for the speed of light. It is therefore clear that we cannot rely on common sense to tell us how to relate measurements taken by observers in relative motion. Others (notably Poincaré and Lorentz) had realized this before Einstein (though unknown to him); what Einstein did was to show that the constancy of the speed of light with respect to differently moving observers (which had previously only been looked at from the point of view of electromagnetic theory) was really quite consistent with a fundamental concept of Newtonian mechanics, that observers in constant relative motion with respect to each other observe the same laws of motion.* As a natural result of this perception, the special theory of relativity follows logically, with all its consequences. These consequences include the paradoxical fact that identical clocks run at different rates when they are moving at different

* According to Newton, the acceleration of a body is proportional to the force acting on it; the acceleration appears the same to all observers moving with constant velocity relative to each other.

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speeds.* Perhaps the most startling result, however, is that mass is a form of energy.

No one before Einstein had been able to follow through the internal logic of the relationship between the laws of mechanics and electromagnetism which produced the theory of special relativity, although it is widely believed that the time was ripe for the theory to emerge then, even had Einstein not been the one responsible. The same is not true of his further extension of the logic. Driven by his compulsion to unify the laws of nature, which had already led him to show that the linkage of space and time implied a relation between mass and energy, he postulated that the very structure of space-time was connected with the presence of matter and energy. His theory of general relativity presented the mathematical expression of this reduction of gravitation to geometry. Using this theory he was able not only to account for an astronomical effect (the anomalous advance of the perihelion of Mercury) which Newton's gravitational theory could not explain, but also to predict that light should follow a curved path in a gravitational field, a prediction subsequently verified by observation. Tests of this prediction of the general theory are made every time a solar eclipse occurs, when it is possible to see that stars whose light passes close to the sun appear in positions slightly different from where we know they are.

The theory of special relativity removed the inconsistency between the laws of mechanics and electromagnetism, so it was no longer a puzzle why the speed of light appeared the same to observers moving at different speeds. But there were other discrepancies between the laws of classical physics and the observed laws of nature. In 1901, Planck had managed to describe the distribution of radiation emitted by a hot object† by an equation which could not be derived by classical arguments, by postulating that radiation could be emitted and absorbed only in fixed amounts ("quanta"). This hypothesis was generally ignored because of its radical nature, until Einstein in 1905 made an even more radical assumption, that electromagnetic radiation itself existed in the form of quanta (which was completely in contradiction to the well-established picture of radiation as a wave phenomenon) and used it to explain another puzzling phenomenon, the photoelectric effect.** In the same year, Einstein demonstrated his mastery of statistical mechanics by deriving a quantitative description of Brownian motion,†† and two years later he combined statistical mechanics and the quantum concept to describe the internal thermal vibration of solids, and to explain more anomalous results inexplicable by classical arguments.

In 1913, Niels Bohr gave the old quantum theory its greatest triumph when he used it to explain the structure of the spectrum of light emitted by the hydrogen atoms. However, the foundations of the theory were unsatisfactory, and further progress with it was limited. In the early 20's, Louis de Broglie suggested that just as light, which under most circumstances behaves like a wave, can sometimes behave like a particle, so matter might have a wave-length aspect. The new theory of quantum mechanics, developed independently in two different forms by Schrödinger and Heisenberg, showed that this was indeed the case, and thus the old Newtonian equation of motion was replaced by an equation which predicts not the exact future position and velocity of a particle, but only its probability of being in a certain state, which cannot be specified to arbitrary accuracy in both position and velocity.*** It is impossible in principle to know both the position and velocity to an accuracy better than that given by Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, according to quantum mechanics. Only by performing a measurement on a system are we able to see what state it is in, and as long as the measurement has not been performed, we can only talk about its relative probability of being in various states.

The dominant school of thought in modern physics accepts this "Copenhagen interpretation" which was developed most fully by Bohr and his followers and which tells us that we can never know more about a physical system than the uncertainty principle allows us. Einstein objected vigorously to this interpretation, maintaining that it must be possible to describe reality in strictly deterministic terms, and that the probabilistic language of quantum mechanics was merely evidence of our inability as yet to obtain an adequate description. The incredible physical insight which had enabled him to formulate his theories of relativity was accompanied by a self-confidence that led him on several occasions to ignore experiments which seemed to contradict his theories. Just as it was the experimental results which had finally been proved false, he remained confident that the claims of the ultimate truth of quantum mechanics would eventually be rejected. He stated his intuitive conviction aphoristically: "God does not play dice with the world."

The long debate between Bohr and Einstein, notable for its profundity, ingenuity, and the mutual

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* Because of the huge value of the speed of light (18,000 miles per second) the relativistic slowing of clocks is not noticed under everyday circumstances.

† Actually, a so-called "black body," an idealization which can be modeled theoretically and well approximated experimentally.

** When light shines on certain metals, electrons are emitted. If the frequency of the light is changed, the energy of these "photo-electrons" is changed also, but not the number emitted. This cannot be explained if one assumes that light acts as a wave.

†† Microscopic particles suspended in a liquid undergo a rapid jerky motion as they are buffeted by the sub-microscopic molecules of the liquid.

*** The velocity of a particle (or, more precisely, its momentum) is given by the wavelength of the wave. A pure wave, not made up of a mixture of wavelengths, must extend forever, and so the particle's position is completely uncertain if its velocity is precisely defined. Similarly, to obtain a highly localized disturbance, we must superimpose a large number of waves, so that the better defined the position, the less accurately we know the velocity. Because the number (Planck's constant, denoted by h) which tells us the magnitude of the uncertainty is so small, the uncertainty principle is useful only in dealing with submicroscopic systems, and in everyday life we are able to get along happily with Newtonian mechanics.

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respect of the two opponents, was probably the most important contribution in this century to the long-standing philosophical puzzle of the nature of reality. Einstein threw out suggestion after suggestion of thought experiments which would disprove the uncertainty principle, and Bohr managed each time to find some factor Einstein had neglected. Bohr tried to appeal to Einstein's philosophical side by suggesting a principle of complementarity, whereby the alternative description of nature in terms of concrete particle and diffuse wave involved such non-scientific dual concepts as justice and mercy, but Einstein remained unmoved.

The reason that Bohr's interpretation generally prevailed is that quantum mechanics is an amazingly successful theory, and enables us to describe phenomena taking place in environments as different as stars, magnets, and transistor radios. Physicists do not spend too much time justifying themselves philosophically (a well-known joke is that they spend three days of the week considering the electron as a particle, three days considering it as a wave, while the Sabbath is devoted to sermons on duality) and until someone comes up with a better theory, quantum mechanics gives us the best picture we have of the physical world.

III

Einstein lived for three-quarters of a century, and his own thought was one of the dominating intellectual influences for two-thirds of that time. Any biography of the man must be selective in what it chooses to say about his work and his influence. In the case of books as short as those of Bernstein and Hoffman, the biographer must concentrate on those aspects he considers central. In both of these books, an account in simple and non-technical language of Einstein's contributions to physics is accompanied by a description of his character, which combined nobility and simplicity with a humble awareness of his limited place in a universe of complex and beautiful construction which his own mind had sought to explain. The description is accomplished using Einstein's own words, the words of those who knew him, and by anecdotes. In Hoffman's case, we are also given a number of photographs, showing Einstein at work, at play, alone, with his friends both famous and obscure, as well as a large number of memorabilia.

In a volume as long as that by Clark, the problems are greater. In general, a massive accumulation of detail might be expected to make us lose interest in the subject, unless the details are addressed to some major thesis; in Clark's case, the thesis he himself suggests in his foreword, that Einstein was "one of the greatest tragic figures of our time," is hardly borne out by the account of the life which follows. In fact, the motivating influence of his book seems to be a reaction to what he sees as a tendency to hagiolatry in earlier biographies. As a result, while reaffirming his subject's greatness Clark tends to stress little-emphasized aspects of Einstein: his unreliability as a reporter of his own history (which was due mainly to his playful nature and delight in a good story), his ability to negotiate the most favorable working conditions for himself, and the like. Clark accentuates the ironies he perceives in Einstein's life: the dedicated scientist forced into the public spotlight; the pacifist who urges the building of the atomic bomb; the Zionist who believed in peaceful accommodation with the Arabs but finally acknowledged the necessity to fight. While there may be paradox here, it is hardly the stuff of tragedy.

The unique position Einstein held insures that his biography tells us much about the world of physics in the 20th century, and casts much light on the social history of science. The exploration of Einstein's role in physics is such an awesome project that it has as yet only been attempted piecemeal, most notably in the collection of essays assembled twenty-five years ago by Paul Arthur Schilpp, and it is hardly fair to expect it in a general biography. What we could reasonably ask from a biography of Einstein, however, is a more convincing psychological portrait than that given by Clark. One topic in particular where we could wish for more insight is Einstein's relationship to Jewishness and Judaism.

Hoffman points out that as a child Einstein went through a religious stage, when he was upset at his parents' non-observance, followed by his discovery of the world of science, when he became violently anti-religious. Once past adolescence, he adopted a more tolerant attitude to the foibles of others. Both Hoffman and Bernstein make his later Zionism seem a natural reaction to anti-Semitism. From the more detailed account given by Clark, a somewhat more complex picture emerges.

While it may now, thirty years after Auschwitz and twenty-five after the establishment of a Jewish state, seem that Zionism was an inevitable choice for Einstein, the picture looked quite different immediately after World War I. The non-inevitability of Zionism is more easily seen by looking at the paths chosen by contemporaries of Einstein, such as that of the chemist Fritz Haber, whose process for the synthesization of ammonia had been vital to Germany's war effort, and who was an ardent German patriot and an assimilationist who had even been baptized together with his family. Haber was to be forced out of Germany when the Nazis came to power and to die in Switzerland, on his way to take up a position in the Sieff (later Weizmann) Institute in Palestine. An even more dramatic contrast was Paul Ehrenfest, who was one of Einstein's closest friends. The Viennese-born Ehrenfest had, like Einstein, made significant contributions to statistical mechanics and quantum theory. Married, like Einstein, to a non-Jewish wife who was a physicist, Ehrenfest was offered the chair in Prague vacated by Einstein in 1912, but was unable to take it because he insisted on proclaiming his atheism. Under the same circumstances, Einstein had bowed to Emperor Franz Josef's rule that all professors must affirm some religion, and had declared himself a Jew.

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If we want to know why Einstein voluntarily identified himself as a Jew rather than waiting for external circumstances to force the identification, we need greater insight than any of our authors has given us. Clark devotes some attention to Einstein's stay in Prague. The city was polarized between Germans and Czechs, and so Einstein, with his immersion in a German cultural world but his intense distaste for German nationalism, found himself compelled to associate almost exclusively with the Jewish community. He could also not fail to be impressed by the inescapable atmosphere of a rich Jewish past which pervaded the city.

While the Prague atmosphere may have begun to awaken dormant instincts in Einstein which were eventually to bring him to Zionism some years later, a more fundamental cause may well have been his deep-rooted attachment to his family. Very soon after his father's death in 1902, which he described as the deepest shock he had ever experienced, he married his first wife; his father had disapproved of the relationship. It was during his mother's terminal illness after World War I that he was divorced, married his second wife, who was the daughter of his mother's sister and his father's cousin, and became a convinced Zionist. He subsequently referred to his relationship to the Jewish people as "my strongest human bond." It is difficult to believe that an attachment described in such a fashion could be created by anti-Semitism, as he himself believed.

It is of interest in this connection to pay some attention to what Clark calls Einstein's "cosmic religion," his strong philosophical conviction of a world with a mysterious underlying order which he expressed in religious terms. This attitude was held even more strongly by Newton, the only figure in the history of physics with whom Einstein may really be compared. Bernstein illustrates the mysticism of Newton's thought by quoting from an essay by John Maynard Keynes who called him "the last of the Babylonians and Sumerians, the last great mind which looked out on the visible and intellectual world with the same eyes as those who began to build our intellectual inheritance rather less than 10,000 years ago." Einstein, in turn, compared his own world outlook with that of Spinoza, the philosopher generally considered the first modern thinker, the outsider, a type Isaac Deutscher has called the non-Jewish Jew. Einstein spoke of his personal religious belief as a belief in "Spinoza's God, who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of what exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fates and actions of human beings."

The Midrash contains many accounts of how the patriarch Abraham came to monotheism by a rational investigation of natural and astronomical phenomena. But while Abraham was the first Jew, he was not the first monotheist. The rabbis relate how the secrets of the universe were known to a select few even before Abraham, whose distinction lay in his assertion that monotheism eventually implied a vital concern with the "fates and actions of human beings." The best known of the earlier monotheists, who ascribed to the Deity power only over the heavens, a concern with "the orderly harmony of what exists," was Noah's son Shem, and Shem, of course, was the ancestor of the Babylonians and Sumerians.

TV Vérité

Jane Larkin Crain

Since the release of *Titicut Follies* in 1967, the work of the documentary filmmaker, Frederick Wiseman, has been receiving consistent, and consistently favorable, attention. In Pauline Kael's widely-quoted estimation, Wiseman, whose films all examine the internal workings of our various social institutions, is "probably the most sophisticated intelligence to enter the documentary field in recent years." A three-time Emmy Award winner, Wiseman has been called the "Nader of film documentaries," and has been lauded by *Time* magazine, on the one hand, and by Edgar Z. Friedenberg, on the other, for his ability to point up institutional failures and shortcomings without at the same time sinking to the level of mere moralizing or polemic. His latest work, *Juvenile Court,* a two-and-a-half-hour documentary filmed in Memphis, Tennessee, has recently been shown on National Educational Television, where it inaugurated a Wiseman "Festival," a retrospective of several of his better known films: *Law and Order* (about the Kansas City, Missouri, police department); *Hospital* (shot at Metropolitan Hospital in New York City); *Basic Training* (at Fort Knox, Kentucky); and *Essene* (at an Anglican monastery in the Midwest). Missing from the retrospective are *High School,* made at Northeast High School in Philadelphia, and *Titicut Follies,* a documentary of the Bridgewater (Massachusetts) State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.

Official reaction to Wiseman's finished products has been mixed. *Titicut Follies* is perhaps Wiseman's best-known film precisely because, after it had been filmed and released, the officials of Bridgewater State Hospital took legal steps to prevent its further distribution, on the grounds that the film violated the patients' rights to privacy. Since Wiseman had, of course, obtained permission to make the movie in the first place, it is possible that the hospital administration was concerned not so much with its patients' rights

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as with a feeling that those aspects of Bridgewater's operation that would have figured in the objective, if not the sympathetic, picture were shot on the footage that got left on the cutting-room floor. In any case, a similar litigation is now taking place with regard to *Juvenile Court*.

Wiseman has said of his own work that he "tries to make the final film reflect the complexity of the subject," and most critics have been eager to acknowledge his sensitivity to nuance and irony, his willingness to present both "sides" of any particular story, the precision and economy with which he captures the various rhythms and the texture of those relationships between "staff" and "clients" that determine the essential shape of the institutions he portrays. Yet it has also generally been felt that the *meaning* of Wiseman's movies, taken singly or as a whole, is unmistakable, it being the assumption of most of his critics that any "objective" documentation of American institutions will constitute, *ipso facto,* an indictment of those institutions. Even if the rudiments of practical service to needy humans are clearly in evidence, are not institutions by their very nature "inhuman" and "depersonalizing"? A doctor may be able to treat a knife wound or a policeman prevent one, but what Wiseman's films seem to confirm most forceably for such critics is the suspicion that nothing is really being done to treat the disease of imperfection that presently afflicts American society.

But to use Wiseman's movies merely to encourage the impulse to self-castigation is to do them an injustice. While Wiseman's intentions may be sociological, his work resists formularized interpretation. The movies deal with individuals, not issues; they leave us with impressions, rather than with concrete knowledge of particular situations; they are not exhortations, but, rather, explorations of the various ways in which private and collective experience impinge on one another, why this happens, and how people respond in the context of the interaction. And it is in these terms that each of the movies finally succeeds or fails, not according to how it harmonizes with the preconceptions of its viewers or, for that matter, its creator.

WHILE the subjects of Wiseman's films may not seem at first glance to be especially enlivening—"the individual's relationship to American institutions," as the press releases summarize his great theme, conjures up images of dismal corridors, evil-smelling disinfectant, and a tangle of numbing routine and bureaucratic ineptitude—the first thing to be remarked of these movies is that they possess, for the most part, a style and verve that put *Dragnet* and *Emergency!* to shame. Where they do not, where the air of pointlessness and tedium we normally associate with institutional life takes over, it is in the case of institutions whose very reason to exist is saturated with ambiguity.

The most extreme instance of this sort of tedium arises in *Essene,* Wiseman's study of monastic life, in which a great deal of the monks' time seems given over to trying to figure out just what the meaning and justification of monastic life are in the first place. The insecurity and confusion of the monks in *Essene* are no doubt rooted in the misgivings and anxieties of the modern Church itself, in the retreat from formalism that, at least on the evidence of this film, has led only to an aimless experimentalism. Much of what goes on in *Essene* resembles more than anything else sessions in group therapy, as the community as a whole attempts to minister to the purely private and psychological crises of its members. Even the abbot, a man of extraordinary intelligence and imagination, will interrupt the Eucharist to deliver a brief sermon on a Brother's nervous breakdown and subsequent recovery. Frequent and self-conscious entreaties go up during prayer meetings about the Berrigans, the victims of Hiroshima, the suffering world generally—as if the men were casting about for something, anything, to which to attach importance, rather than actually requesting divine intervention. With the possible exception of the abbot, no member of the company manifests an unambivalent or untroubled belief in the authority of the Almighty, and hence the activities of each consist in little more than the attempt to maintain his own personal equilibrium.

Unlike the members of a monastic community, those who staff and those who attend public high school do so with, respectively, the sanction and the insistence of society as a whole. Wiseman filmed *High School* at Northeast High School in Philadelphia, and the principal has called the film a "cruel, middle-class debunking picture." Wiseman does devote more time in it to instances of official inadequacy and unimaginativeness than to those situations in which teachers try to teach and students try to learn, yet the movie has the distinct virtue of revealing to just how great an extent the public high school as an institution has anyway transgressed the limits of its reasonable scope of operations, involving itself deeply in areas in which it has neither the competence nor the right to meddle: most notably, the character and psyche of its individual students. That the schools have hardly progressed in this direction on their own, or without the complicity of parents, is confirmed time after time in this movie as we see parents requesting that guidance counselors and disciplinarians deal with personal behavior problems, determine the general outline of future plans, teach grooming, morals, and manners, minister to psychological distress, and so on.

It is not surprising, then, that teachers, counselors, and administrators seem to view the imparting of specific academic knowledge as merely one of the myriad tasks they are rightfully supposed to perform. There are only a few scenes in *High School* that deal with actual academic or vocational training. Many more take place in detention halls, at counseling sessions or "pep rallies," in cake-baking classes, exercise classes, modeling classes, and in amateur group-therapy sessions—and this, if memory serves, is an accurate rendering of the typical high-school experience. Even the actual teaching that does go on is tainted by the shame that seems to attach itself

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to such things as grammar and English literature, and classroom situations are perverted by the minimal weight being given to the practical function of education. While self-styled dictators harangue their charges about the need to make up gym classes and show their lavatory passes, English teachers play Simon and Garfunkel records to students many of whom have probably yet to learn how to write a simple sentence.

LIFE in a monastery may be said to be suffused with contradiction and uncertainty because history seems in effect to have withdrawn its assent to the legitimacy of the monastic ethos. Public schools, on the other hand, seem to have gone a long way toward sacrificing their own legitimacy, by having gotten themselves so far removed from the real work they were established to do. In both cases the line at which individual autonomy bows before institutional authority has become totally blurred; neither institution appears to know why it exists, or can keep the reason for its existence clearly in sight. *Basic Training,* Wiseman's documentary on the military, shows an institution that has only recently begun to be affected in a serious way by considerations like these, and that still takes for granted the virtues of discipline and routinization in the service of a narrowly specific objective.

The purpose of basic training is virtually perfect in its clarity: young men of wildly different backgrounds are brought together and trained for combat. Once the premise is granted, the kind of discipline that is maintained throughout the training, however uninviting as a steady diet, is perfectly understandable, as is the constant enjoinder, repeated ritualistically by the commanding officers, "Do what you're told to do when you're told to do it, and there won't be any trouble." For Americans especially, there is no gainsaying the difficulty of having to adhere so strictly to the commands of institutional authority. And, too, there are potential tensions implicit in the remoteness of the situations—in this case, Vietnam—for which basic training is a preparation. The officers in *Basic Training,* who are, incidentally, far more "human" than might be expected, all recognize this, and as a consequence are almost zealously careful to explain at every step of the way the *point* of the particular exercise, instruction, or command. For the most part the recruits respond with equanimity, in some cases with enthusiasm, and in others with what looks like good-natured resignation. The officers themselves have all survived similar training, and they "relate" to the recruits with a blend of self-assurance and sympathy.

Whatever their appeal or lack of it, the activities in which the trainers and trainees are engaged in *Basic Training* are at least not characterized by the maddening senselessness that pervades so much of the action in *High School.* What we see in this movie resists symbolic interpretation; things are pretty much as they seem, although understanding them in their own terms does require that we make those imaginative connections between the theoretical and the actual that are also required of the officers and the recruits themselves; we must, in other words, approve for the term of the movie the inevitable necessity of society's maintaining an army, and it is to Wiseman's credit, in a setting in which the taking of cheap shots must have been an ever-present temptation, that he makes it perfectly natural for us to do so.

No such willing suspension of disapproval is necessary in considering institutions the nature and scope of whose operation are more clearly determined by the visible, active, and immediate realities of the communities which they serve. These are, for instance, the police, hospitals, and courts—the locales, respectively, of Wiseman's *Law and Order, Hospital,* and *Juvenile Court*—whose staffs regularly deal with crisis and emergency, those moments in life when for whatever reason individuals are unable to function autonomously and the need for public intervention is evident, necessary, and pressing.

Even before we actually see these films it is easy enough to imagine what they deal with: family quarrels, thefts, coronaries, knife wounds, purgings, drug abuse, child neglect, muggings. And we are also prepared, more or less, for the degree of suffering and misery they depict. What comes as a surprise is the universal resourcefulness and intelligence displayed by the policemen, public-health officials, judges, and social workers in their handling of the various matters that fall within their province. Of course, much of the activity in these three films is a response to problems that are clearly definable and for which precedent provides the key to at least partial solution. In *Hospital,* for example, it rapidly becomes evident that whatever is within the bounds of medical knowledge and competence to do in the alleviation of sickness is in fact being done. Similarly, in both *Law and Order* and *Juvenile Court,* a great deal of time is devoted to what is for the police and the courts routine work: apprehension of criminals, retrieval of stolen property, the finding of homes for abandoned or abused children, adjudication of straightforward charges of petty theft and truancy. Moreover, because of the specificity of the work involved, we are left with the reassuring impression that these are areas in which greater effectiveness—by means of more personnel, more training, more equipment—could be both realistically aimed for and achieved.

BECAUSE Wiseman has edited *Juvenile Court* with an eye to greater narrative continuity than exists in any of his previous work (it is also the longest) we are able to follow the progress of several individuals from the time they enter the court, through the initial evaluation of their "cases," up to the final disposition. Obviously, the more complicated or recalcitrant a problem, the more likely it is that its resolution will be at best approximate. But especially in view of widespread charges that the judicial system in general has become paralyzed by the cumbersomeness of its own machinery, by overcrowding, and by inadequate staffing, what is most arresting in *Juvenile Court* is not

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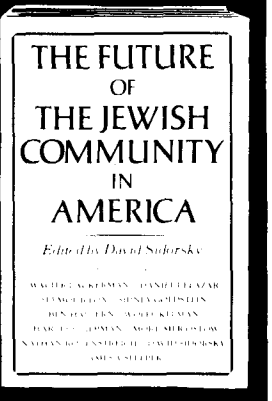
the expected resultant air of intractability and frustration but its very opposite: the sense, strongly held by the participants themselves and communicated very forcefully to the viewer, that many problems, the majority in fact, can be resolved satisfactorily—that is, with attentiveness to the special needs of each individual case—and that the framework of the institution itself can accommodate a complex burden of responsibility.

Again to a greater degree than in any of the other films, *Juvenile Court* is involved in the study of specific characters. The "star," as it were, is Judge Kenneth Turner, whom we see in the courtroom and in chambers, but there are others, attorneys, social workers, and court officers of various kinds, of equal energy and presence. These "officials" do not play an adversary role, lining up on one side of a clearly drawn battleline, with the children who come before the court on the other. The two seem in fact to be more nearly allies than enemies; all the court's actions are rooted in the proposition that it is not too late for any of these children, and that, therefore, no effort expended in their behalf is likely to be wasted. The effort expended, whether the proposition is true or not, is little short of staggering.

In one particularly illuminating thread of *Juvenile Court,* concerning a young man accused of armed robbery, we get a kind of capsulized perspective on the various facets of the court's operation. The young man is almost eighteen, and the first question is whether or not he should be tried in juvenile or criminal court. The issue is complicated by the fact that the boy claims he participated in two robberies only because his life had been threatened by his partner. The boy believes that if he is tried in criminal court he will be found innocent, but his lawyer, who knows better, requests a conference with the judge for some plea-bargaining. After a lengthy session in which seven or eight people familiar with the boy's history thoroughly and painstakingly review his case with the judge, it is decided that it will be in the boy's and society's "best interest"

The Future of the Jewish Community in America

Edited by David Sidorsky



In this fascinating volume—which will surely prove indispensable to all students of contemporary Jewish society—American Jewry sits, so to speak, for its collective portrait: the past is assessed, the present described, the future contemplated. It is an effort prompted by the growing questioning that discerning Jews have begun to manifest regarding the continuity of Jewish identity and the quality of Jewish life. For American Jews are no longer a community of immigrants and sons of immigrants seeking to integrate into the general society. Today, American Jews find themselves almost totally acculturated, part and parcel of the mainstream of American life—a development not without its tensions.

The new situation has motivated new self-examination on the part of many in the Jewish community. It was with this recognition and with a sense of shared concern about the character and direction of American Jewish life that the American Jewish Committee convened a Task Force on the Future of the Jewish Community in America. The chapters in this volume were originally prepared as position papers for the deliberations of the Task Force. Their authors represent the best informed thought on crucial areas of concern for the Jewish community.

In a wide-ranging discussion ("Judaism and the Revolution of Modernity"), David Sidorsky, the editor of the volume, sets the current problems in perspective as he demonstrates the effects (sometimes damaging) of modernism on the Jewish experience. It is a discussion which Nathan Rotenstreich acutely pursues in his essay, "Emancipation and Its Aftermath."

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Jewish education is the subject of two essays: "The Jewish School System in the United States," by Walter Ackerman; and "Toward a General Theory of Jewish Education," by Seymour Fox. Finally, Daniel Elazar contributes what is, in effect, a "who's who" of American Jewry's decision-makers.

The essays in this volume, ten in all, represent the best in American Jewish self-understanding. They identify and examine, in a fashion unparalleled to date, the institutions, tendencies, and programs that shape the character of American Jewry. They also form the basis for a new agenda for American Jewish action in the years to come.

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that he be charged with simple robbery and sentenced to a short term in a training school. The decision is based on the likelihood that if the boy is tried as an adult for armed robbery he will be sentenced to twenty years in prison.

Since it is recognized by the various authorities involved, including the police, that the boy is more disturbed than "criminal," he is treated with the leniency that the judicial system reserves for children. When the boy hears the judge's verdict, however, he becomes hysterical, and screams: "I'm innocent. I feel I've been trapped. Is there no justice for me?" Although the question is asked in a dramatically charged manner, it does not really come across either as a serious challenge to the validity of the judge's decision or even as an ironic comment on a judicial system eager to disregard questions of guilt or innocence and focus instead on the issue of mental health. However we may pity him in his evident distress, the point is, simply, that there *is* justice for the boy, and that it has been served. One might wish for a tidier resolution, or some guarantee that the boy will in fact be able to teach himself to function normally. But though the means for deciding that the boy needs help and then making it available to him can be institutionalized, the "cure" itself cannot. A great deal of what goes on in the juvenile court, Wiseman's film suggests, depends for its ultimate social efficacy on the extent to which any individual's capacity for rational behavior can be relied on, and not even the most sophisticated knowledge can gauge this with consistent or infallible accuracy, let alone insure it.

ALTHOUGH Wiseman has said that his films are meant to reflect his own responses to his subjects, his narrative "voice" is remarkably unobtrusive, as his critics universally affirm. Indeed, one of the major achievements of his work is that we feel we are watching people engrossed in the business of their own lives, and largely indifferent to the presence of an outside observer. Unlike the home-movie self-consciousness that came to characterize so much of *An American Family* (probably the biggest box-office documentary in the history of the genre), the people in Wiseman's movies really do seem to be behaving as they would ordinarily. They appear to be no more or less caught up in amateur theatrics than people ever are; they strike poses, perhaps, but not literally for the camera.

Just as, however, we might respond with acute embarrassment or estrangement in witnessing, say, other people's marital quarrels, there are a number of moments in Wiseman's work in which the very immediacy of the proceedings leaves the feeling that it would have been the better part of good taste, to say nothing of compassion, to avert our eyes until the trouble eased. When, for example, an elderly man in *Hospital* is being questioned about a possible urinary disturbance, and is clearly mortified to the point of tears, it is difficult to see how spectatorship, so patently intrusive here, is justified. Similarly with the painful exchanges between children and parents in *High School* and *Juvenile Court,* or between troubled recruits and army chaplains in *Basic Training.* These are situations in which we have obviously moved away from any arena that could be defined as "public," and there is something cold-blooded about the camera's presence in them, violating intimacy simply to give a "feel" of those variegations of human distress to which, in the context of the movies, we have no way of responding adequately. If, actually, a trace of "depersonalization" inheres in Wiseman's work, it lies less in the mechanisms of the institutions he depicts than in the scant value he himself appears to attach to human privacy; institutions violate that privacy perforce, he sometimes does so arbitrarily.

The relationship between the people in these movies and the audience watching them on the screen is an especially peculiar one. They are not characters in fiction, and one cannot regard

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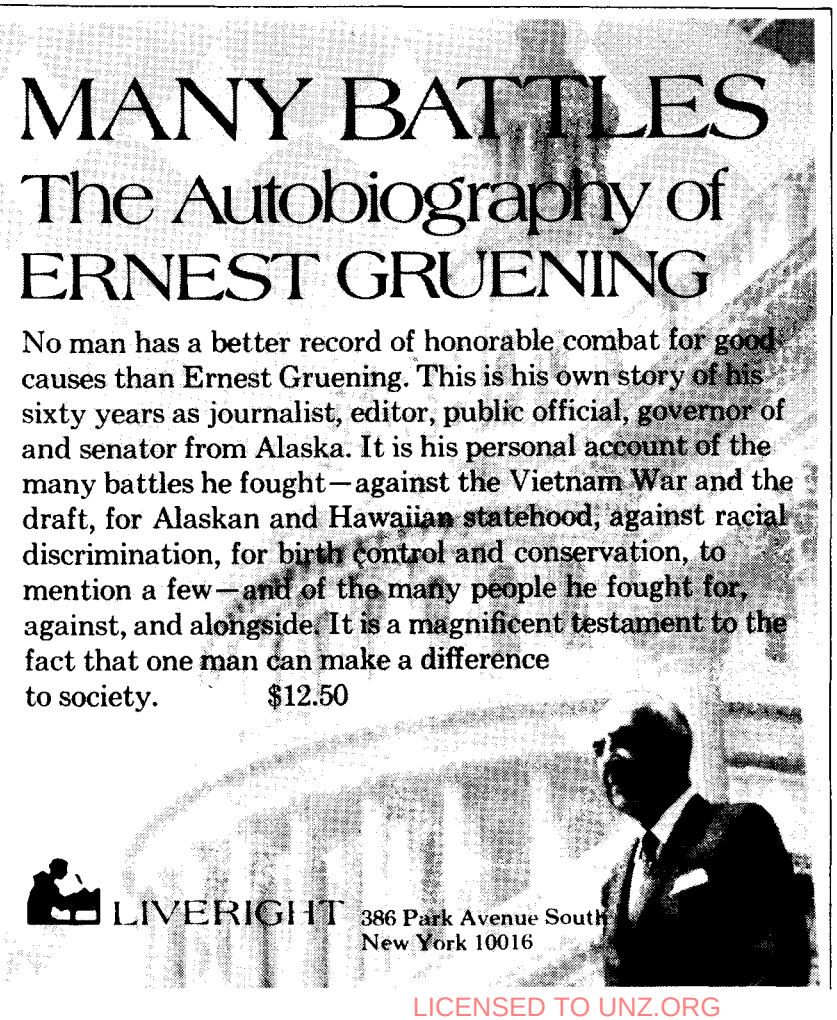

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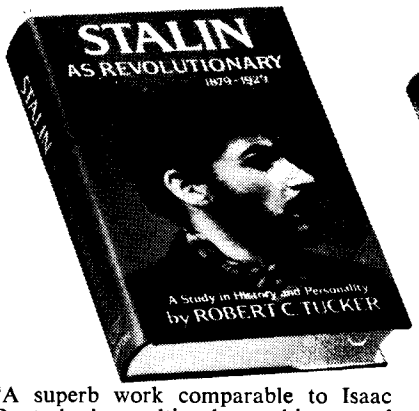
them as representatives of anything other than themselves. Since, however, Wiseman's structuring of the events he films is a very definite kind of dramatic authorship, on one level we inevitably expect his "subjects" somehow to transcend the limits of their actual identities, to become larger than life, to work those miracles of dramatic patterning and coherence that lend compelling eloquence to art. We wait, in other words, for large themes to emerge; and they simply do not. In their stead we get varyingly successful degrees of artistic form, imposed either by Wiseman's brilliant editing of the miles of footage he shoots for each film, or, more rarely, by the dynamics of the situation being filmed. Thus, *Basic Training* is in many ways the most satisfying of the movies simply because it tells a story that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In addition, the clear-cut authority structure of the army helps to lend a sense of order to this film about army life; the movies about institutions that are themselves in disarray tend sometimes to be too faithful a mirror of their subjects.

BUT if on one level the people in Wiseman's movies do not transcend themselves or their situations, on another level they continually astonish us by the largeness of self they do, as it were artlessly, display; life in even the most workaday and unembellished contexts is significant enough to engross us. At a time when so much of fiction is trying to persuade us that ordinary experience lacks essential order and stature, Wiseman has come along to document the richness and continuity of that experience. While our final impressions of the institutions themselves may be somewhat fragmentary—Wiseman's adherence to an interior perspective takes its inevitable toll in the films' general lack of clear focus or sharp edges—we are left feeling that we really know the people who run them. As it turns out, they are thoughtful, competent, articulate—ordinary people possessed of an extraordinary and irreducible presence. For this good news alone there is reason to be grateful.



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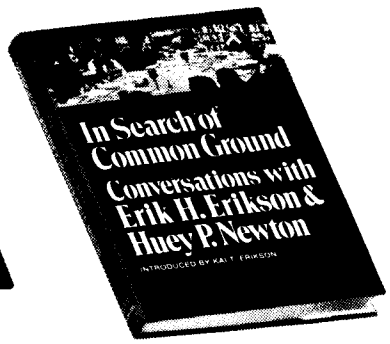

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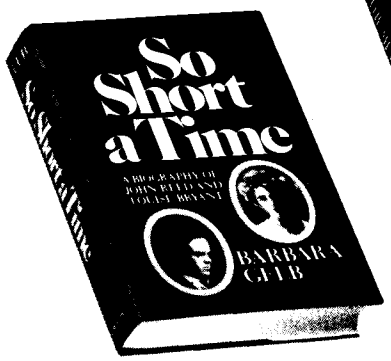

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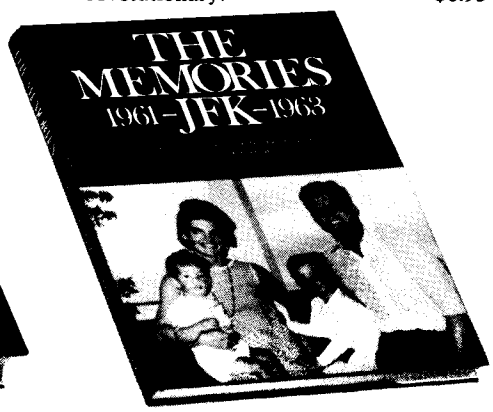

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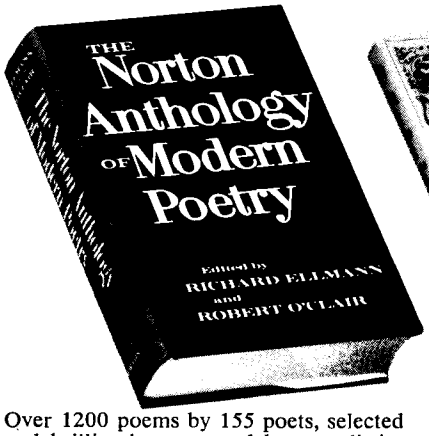

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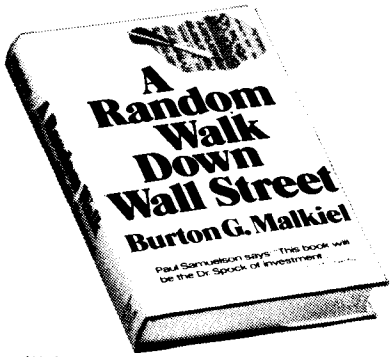

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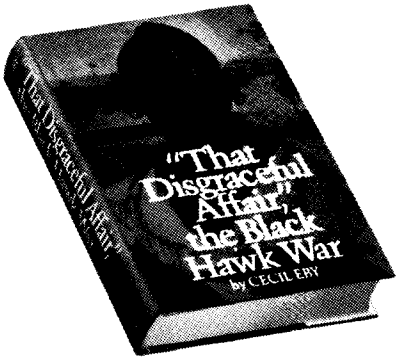

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Jews in Russia

THE SOVIET CAGE. By WILLIAM KOREY. *Viking. 369 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by ELLIOTT ABRAMS

LARGE numbers of people in this country have by now become aware of the situation of Soviet Jewry, yet one may question how well this situation is understood. Ten years ago Soviet Jews were asking for the right to bake *matzot* at Passover; today they are demanding freedom. The enormous change that has taken place in the goals and tactics of Jewish activists in the Soviet Union, and the reaction to it of the Soviet regime, are the subjects of William Korey's valuable book. Containing both a survey of Russian-Jewish history and a detailed look at the present Jewish protest movement, *The Soviet Cage* seems intended, and is well suited, for the thousands of Americans who bring to the subject great interest but no specialized knowledge.

Popular anti-Semitism is not exactly a recent development in Russia, but Korey is certainly right to note that it has usually been government policy that either inhibited or facilitated the translation of popular attitudes and feelings into acts. Early Soviet policy, under Lenin, condemned anti-Semitism strongly and attempted to root it out, a natural enough policy considering both socialist theory and the fact that many early Bolshevik leaders were Jewish. When the laws of the Soviet Union were written, Jews were made one of the 108 officially recognized nationalities, and the Jewish religion was likewise given official status.

These days of enlightenment ended under Stalin in the 30's, and since then the Soviet regime has at various times tolerated, encouraged, and practiced anti-Semitism. Of course, the regime itself is devoted to atheism, and greatly restricts and criticizes the activities of all religions. Korey, however, makes it clear that the Soviet government's policy toward Jews does not parallel its policy toward Islam or the Orthodox church; the Jewish religion is treated considerably worse, and Jews are not even permitted the national "Religious Center" (a sort of national coordinating committee) allowed to other religions and essential under Soviet law if any sort of communal life is to be maintained. By any measure (such as numbers of clergy ordained, prayer books and religious articles available, or houses of worship open), the policy of the Soviet government toward the Jewish faith goes beyond the bounds of a general hostility to religion, and enters the area of outright anti-Semitism.

Korey asks, as one must, why Soviet policy changed in the 30's. He notes one special condition of the time, the nationalism and chauvinism that developed as the Second World War approached, but does not mention a second consideration, namely the usefulness of anti-Semitism to Stalin as a weapon in his personal struggle for power. Two more fundamental reasons are adduced by Korey to explain why the regime became, and remains, anti-Semitic. First, he notes that it is in the nature of totalitarianism to oppose all pluralist ties, sentimental as well as institutional, especially those of a supra-national character. Second, he reminds us that, after all, Russia has a long history of anti-Semitism, and it is in a sense less surprising that it continues than it would be to find that it had been eradicated.

Soviet anti-Semitism is not, Korey warns, anything like the Nazi sort. The Soviet regime does not kill Jews, and indeed it must be recognized that, statistically speaking, Jews in Russia are in some ways a privileged group. Constituting 1 per cent of the population, they hold, for example, two-and-a-half times that percentage of the places in higher education. Despite discrimination, many Jews have become highly paid doctors, scientists, and intellectuals; and despite quotas, the number has continued to increase. The discrimination which exists, Korey explains, is of two sorts: communal, in that Jews are denied many rights accorded other religious groups, and individual, in that Jews are subject to various quotas and are barred from any real role in the political life of the country. These restrictions are very serious, but they were for years borne without significant protest by Soviet Jews. It is this period of which Elie Wiesel wrote in *The Jews of Silence,* and it lasted until the Six-Day War of June 1967.

The Six-Day War produced a surge of emotion in the Russian-Jewish community, a development to which the regime responded with great hostility. Korey states that "Having taken, over the years, the most intense measures to obliterate Jewish consciousness, Soviet authorities could not tolerate its revival. Israel's image had to be blackened. A vituperative propaganda campaign of unprecedented proportions against the Jewish state was unleashed." Quickly enough the target became not only Israel but "World Zionism," and finally the campaign turned into little more than a vicious attack on Jews and Judaism. In 1968 the authorities found it convenient to publish a new book by the leading Soviet anti-Semite, Trofim Kichko, a vile little piece of bigotry worthy of Julius Streicher in which readers learned that Judaism teaches "thievery, betrayal, and perfidy" and a "poisonous hatred for all other peoples." Anti-Semitic propaganda continued to appear in the USSR throughout the late 60's, culminating in 1971 in an article in *Pravda* that surely contained a warning to Jews: "A person who turns to the Zionist belief auto-

ELLIOTT ABRAMS *has contributed reviews and articles to* COMMENTARY *and the* New Leader.

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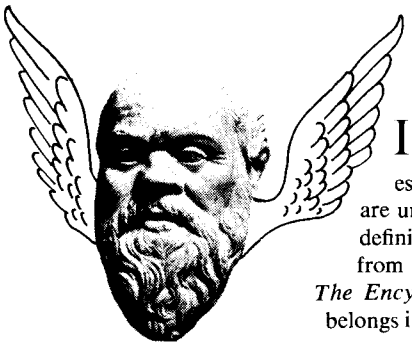

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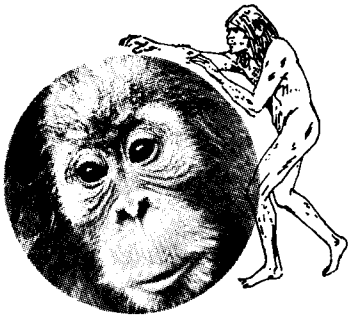

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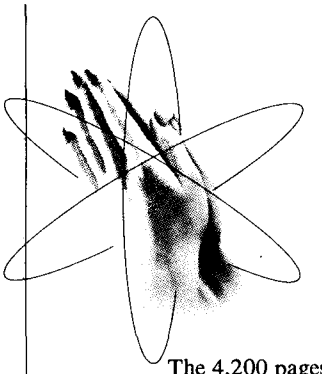

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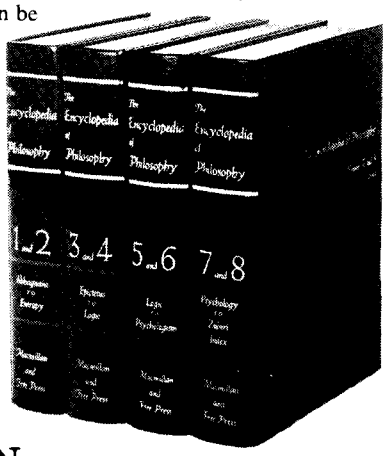

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matically becomes an agent of the international Zionist concern and, hence, an enemy of the Soviet people."

It should not have required genius to understand that if the Six-Day War increased the sense of Jewish identity among Soviet Jews, a government-sponsored anti-Semitic propaganda campaign would only serve to strengthen Jewish consciousness all the more. And so it did. Indeed, the greater the suppression, the greater has been the expressed desire on the part of many Soviet Jews to leave Russia. (Although it is much too soon to determine the effects of the recent Middle East war, there seems no reason to doubt that the Soviet government's support of the Arab cause will, as in 1967, further alienate the Soviet-Jewish population from the regime.) The account in *The Soviet Cage* of the development of Jewish activism since 1970 is the book's greatest contribution to the literature on Russian Jewry. Relying on official sources, the world press, and, most importantly, *samizdat* (underground publications from Russia), Korey presents each successive step in this remarkable story. Petitions, demonstrations, show trials—all are described in detail. Korey devotes three chapters to the trials of Jewish protesters in Riga, Kishinev, and Leningrad, including the notorious 1970 Leningrad trial for hijacking which produced two death sentences and spurred a successful worldwide effort to get the sentences commuted. His knowledge of both underground and aboveground material enables Korey to draw a very full and fascinating picture of the Jewish protesters and their manifold activities.

THE future of Soviet Jewry is a matter of great uncertainty, as is the possible role of Americans in affecting that future. Since it has become clear that some forms of action will produce the desired response on the part of the Soviet regime, the question of tactics has become crucial both here and in the Soviet Union. In the U.S. debate has slackened on the Jackson Amendment, which was attached to trade legislation pending before the Congress. Introduced by Senator Henry M. Jackson, the amendment would deny U.S. government credits and guarantees, and the granting of "most-favored-nation" treatment, to countries that do not respect their citizens' right to emigrate. In Senator Jackson's view, much of our recent and prospective trade with Russia (such as the now notorious wheat deal) is much more beneficial to the Soviets than to the U.S., and we are accordingly justified in asking for a *quid pro quo*. Soviet behavior during the recent war in the Middle East has in any case left Congress with little inclination to grant the Russians the trade credits they seek, and the Nixon administration finally suspended its request for the credits in late October. Senator Jackson, however, is pressing forward with his amendment, which most observers, especially in light of recent developments, consider nearly certain to pass.

IF THE question of tactics is perplexing for Americans, it is even more difficult for Soviet Jews. As Korey makes clear, though the leaders of Russia's "democratic movement," such as the Medvedevs, Andrei Sakharov, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and underground journals like *The Chronicle of Current Events*, have strongly supported the Jewish activists, the latter have avoided returning the favor. Korey suggests the reason: the Jewish protest movement "did not seek internal change within the USSR. Indeed, it carefully eschewed such an objective. It was not reform within Soviet society which was sought; rather, escape from that society [to Israel] was the goal." This tactic has been designed to persuade the regime that the Jewish movement has "a fundamentally different character from that of the democratic dissenters, whose aspirations [are] regarded by the narrow and parochial occupants of the Kremlin as genuinely threatening to their power." Korey carefully reports these facts, but does not analyze in depth the calculations about Soviet politics which the Jewish activists must have made. The forsaking of any role in the movement for democratic reform within the USSR and the adoption instead of the single goal of emigration, bespeak a despair with respect to the prospects of the former and a sense of hopefulness about the latter; might there not be a hint here for those outside the USSR who are uncertain about the most effective means of aiding Soviet Jews?

EVEN if the right to emigrate were granted, however, the future of Soviet Jewry would still be uncertain, since no one believes that all or nearly all Soviet Jews would in fact leave. What of the millions who would stay? Putting aside the implausible chance that democracy will replace totalitarianism within the Soviet Union, two possibilities remain. The Soviet regime (like that of Poland) could greatly lessen the pressure on itself from the Jewish community by allowing the activists, and religious Jews, to leave. The regime could at the same time remove some of the restrictions on Jewish communal life and on religious activities, neither of which contains a threat to political stability. The result would be a situation much better both for Soviet Jews and, it would seem, for the regime itself, than that which now exists. Alternatively, the Soviet government could continue to foster and practice anti-Semitism, a policy that would tend to strengthen Jewish consciousness while denying Jews the right to express that consciousness through emigration or through communal or religious activities.

Neither of these two alternative courses is unlikely, nor is it implausible that the Soviets may shift from one to the other according to the winds of international politics and domestic developments. As Korey notes, the Kremlin responds to pressure on the Jewish issue because it is not a matter directly affecting Soviet national security or political stability. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, though the situation of Soviet Jews could get much worse, domestic and international pressure might well result in a substantial mitigation of their plight.

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A Certain Politics

WORLD WITHOUT END, AMEN. By JIMMY BRESLIN. *Viking. 329 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by DOROTHY RABINOWITZ

A GREAT deal of attention of any kind invariably ends up making a social class nervous. A great deal of literary attention guarantees more serious discomfort, particularly when it comes from an insider: that member of the class who has undertaken, as a vocation, the job of translating his culture to the world outside, and is as likely as not to be its greatest enemy. One would have to go a long way to find a society with better reason to be frantic in this regard than the lower-middle-class Irish and Italians of New York City who woke up some years ago to discover that the fates governing such things had appointed former newspaper columnist Jimmy Breslin as their interpreter, a man whose word on the estate of that class has by now come to be accorded the weight of sociological truth.

Breslin's latest and most serious contribution to the lore of the lower-middle class is *World Without End, Amen*, a novel about an Irish cop whose solution to the mean and sodden existence of a New York policeman's life, and a depressing enviroment in Queens, is to travel to the troubles in Northern Ireland. Dermot suffers from unnameable tensions: his wife is sexually both uninterested and uninteresting; his work is meaningless to him, except for such opportunities as he has, in the course of it, to beat up blacks. Finally, Dermot has been put in the "Bow and Arrow" ranks of the police, those members of the force who are either alcoholics or men otherwise too irresponsible to be issued guns.

Only once did Dermot ever take some satisfaction in his work: in his early days on the force, he tracked down the missing husband of a suicide, a prolonged and dedicated effort made on his own time, in off-duty hours. The suggestion that work performed in the course of a day, and in the line of duty, does not quite qualify as something in which a man might take great pride, is characteristic of this novel, which devotes itself essentially to the disparagement of ordinary life: such lives, at any rate, as are lived by the lower-middle classes of Queens, the policemen and their wives whose days are eked out in accordance with their small concerns—their bingo games at the local movie house, their Thursday cleanings, their cars. At the bingo games, the eyes of the women are glazed, the pastry soggy, the conversation disjointed. The women do not talk much: they know nothing of the world, or of politics (except that they hate Communism and busing). Dermot, through whose half-conscious sensibility the concerns of this world are played out, reflects his creator's amazement: these people, they wake up, they go about their business, they don't even know, sitting in thir chairs and concentrating on their bingo games, that their existence is mean and joyless.

Suspended from the force for beating up a transvestite who has —to Dermot's characteristically insensitive astonishment—aroused him sexually, Dermot runs off to Ulster, where he finally comes into contact with the dignity and the sense of life's worth which he had failed to find in himself, his family, or his neighbors in Queens. He rubs shoulders with kin and co-religionists who have, despite their terrible poverty, a cause to stir the blood. The Irish Catholics Dermot meets here are not afraid of Communists: they have pictures of Che Guevara and Mao on their walls. Dermot learns in their company that Angela Davis was unjustly imprisoned, and that the police have the same relation to blacks in America as the British troops have to the Catholics in Northern Ireland. Dermot, unequipped for making the connections, can only bluster that Fidel Castro is "a faggot." Touched, but in the end unchanged by his experience, Dermot goes home to Queens.

There is no hope for the Dermots and their families, Breslin wishes to teach us—not because they are poor or uncultured or incurious (for so are their kin in Ulster), but because they are political reactionaries. That so much of life's worth should be thought to depend on a certain politics might be thought extraordinary in another time than ours. Yet this is a cornerstone of belief for Breslin, as it is for the sensibility he represents. Once, he reports in his collection, *The World of Jimmy Breslin*, he had a sign put up on the lawn of his house in Queens:

> SORRY TO MAKE YOU LOOK AT THIS BECAUSE I KNOW HOW TIRED YOU PEOPLE GET MOVING YOUR LIPS WHEN YOU READ.

"I think you're sick," the sign painter advised Breslin. "No I'm not, I just hate those people," Breslin answered, adding: "I hate them all. In the whole area where we live, I hate them all." *World Without End, Amen* is an expression of that feeling, sometimes disguised as compassion and never very effectively, but neither that nor Mr. Breslin's boorishness can avail the ensuing tedium here.

DOROTHY RABINOWITZ, *a regular contributor, is currently at work on a book on the survivors of the Holocaust.*

Remaking Reality

THE POLITICS OF LYING. By DAVID WISE. *Random House. 415 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT G. HAZO

AT FIRST glance, *The Politics of Lying* would seem promising. Written before the Watergate affair burst, its arresting title anticipating what is now called a national crisis, the book, which comes buttressed with a heavy load of references, is directed to the revival of the ideal of "the politics of truth." Its author, David Wise (co-author of *The Invisible Government* as well as *The U-2 Affair* and *The Espionage Establishment),* also has the requisite credentials; he was correspondent and bureau chief in Washington for the old *Herald Tribune* and is now a kind of freelance critic of recent governments residing in the capital.

ROBERT G. HAZO *is Director of Special Programs at the University of Pittsburgh.*

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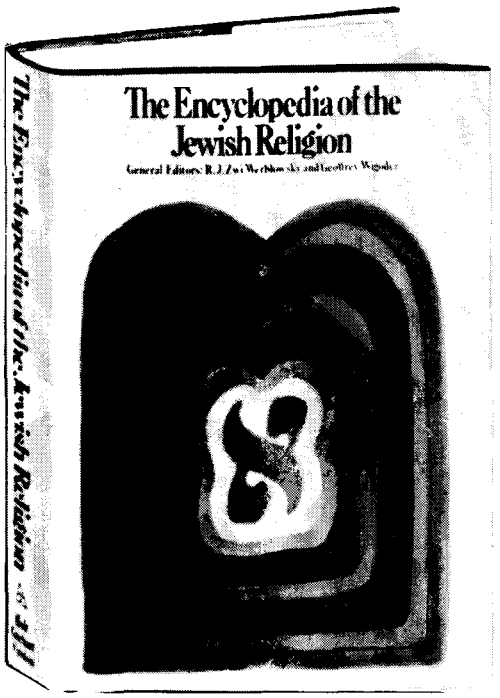
Did you know that the Bar Mitzvah ceremony is unknown in the Bible and Talmud? (see page 57) That Judaism frowns on celibacy? (see page 81) That the mystical Kabbalah has doctrines in common with Hinduism? (see page 389)



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To turn these pages is to explore four thousand years of Judaism – its origins, history, scriptures, ceremonies, traditions, festivals, sacred languages (do you know that the Hebrew Bible contains sections not in Hebrew? See page 66), its 613 commandments through which every physical action becomes an act of worship.

Did you know that the words "Mazel Tov" are an ancient astrological formula? See page 254.

Here is the contrast between Jewish and Christian viewpoints on sex and marriage, body and soul (flesh isn't "evil" in Judaism; see page 365). All the multitudinous sects and rites of Judaism through four millennia are included... Ashkenazi and Sephardi... Orthodox, Conservative and Reform... the priestly Sadducees and their rabbinical rivals, the Pharisees (whose philosophy pervades the New Testament that denounces them)... The Qumran Community, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were written by Jews who awaited not just one Messiah but two. Here are the hidden Jews who lived for centuries in Persia disguised as Moslems and in Portugal and Majorca disguised as Catholics ... the dancing Hasidim, who still wear the formal costume of medieval Polish noblemen. Do you know what makes kosher wine kosher? See page 115. Does Judaism permit therapeutic abortion? See page 4.

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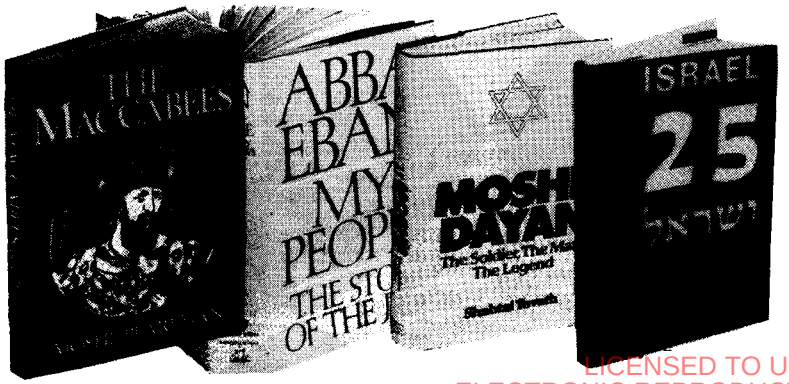

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Wise's book, however, turns out to be of minimal worth. It is, among other things, transparently self-serving. Despite his denials, Wise is an advocate and a hypocritical one at that; holding aloft the banner of journalistic objectivity, he has written what can only be called a screed. There is, he claims, "in this country, an in-built tension between press and government which cannot, and should not, be reconciled." Wise seems to interpret this "in-built tension" as a license to find almost everything in the postures and particulars of the executive branch of the government subject to blame; at the same time he extols the virtues of a free press and minimizes its deficiencies. In examining the relationship of government and the media, no accusation is too far-fetched for him, no suspicion too implausible, and no motive too bizarre to attribute to high government executives.

In addition to its approach, there are other faults in *The Politics of Lying*. The book is overstuffed with the known and heavily padded with the trivial. It is also melodramatic and alarmist. It violates its own canons; advocating total candor from government, Wise conceals sources. Worst of all, addressing a problem that is extraordinarily difficult, complex, and perhaps insoluble—the deterioration of public belief in and respect for the authority of government—he has produced an offering that is superficial in analysis and simplistic in prescription.

The main outlines of Wise's argument are easily described. The past four administrations have put together "a sorry and ultimately shocking record of official duplicity." Governments, to be sure, have lied before, but since World War II, more precisely since the U-2 incident, the scope and frequency of official dissimulation have increased enormously. Above all, the fact that the government lies is now part of the public consciousness, and "the curve of public disenchantment" has therefore gone dramatically up. "This erosion of confidence between people and government is perhaps the single most significant political event in America in the past decade."

The only real remedy for lying is for government to tell the truth, Wise asserts. Ideally, the President should take the lead in calling for an end to all official secrecy. Since this is unlikely, we should settle for secrecy with a "sharply limited number of documents" that can be kept hidden for an inflexible maximum of three years. Further, the right to publish must be respected as absolute, the practice of "deep backgrounders" and leaks should be ended, government's public-relations activities cut back, elitism resisted, and so forth. "Lying and secrecy have no place in a democracy," since "the governed must know to what they are consenting."

WISE's combination of sweeping recommendations and exhortations mixed with a few homilies is no substitute for a serious political analysis of the problem *The Politics of Lying* presumably addresses. Although it may satisfy the needs of an amorphous constituency of readers for pat answers to difficult questions, it systematically ignores or distorts several major issues, among them the role of the news media themselves in the progressive weakening of the credibility of political authority. Thus, the perfectly legitimate concern about what Wise calls a conspiracy of "institutional lying," which he claims infects government, must be matched by a less ingenuous attitude toward the casual relationship between reports of events and events themselves. The images chosen to represent reality are primarily a function of the imperative to compete for attention to which media men subscribe. That the media are used and accepted more as devices of manipulation than as channels for enlightenment may be a commonplace observation; but the consequences of this transformation must be included in any adequate commentary on the problem of credibility.

Lying is a remaking of reality—an accessible way of rendering it more acceptable and satisfying, an often successful way of resolving or rather hiding unpleasant contradictions or of concealing facts, and thus an often effective and powerful way of controlling events that frequently cannot otherwise be controlled. In the field of politics, in which sometimes everything is at stake, one could rather expect duplicity to have achieved a high degree of sophistication and refinement.

The practice has in fact received some vaguely complimentary notice. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., a self-confessed public liar at the time of the Bay of Pigs, observes almost casually in *A Thousand Days*, "Every politician has to fake a little . . . ." Richard Rovere is even more emphatic: "A head of state—particularly in a diverse and democratic society—is necessarily a kind of philanderer and in dealing with his numerous mistresses or constituencies he is bound to make false professions of one sort or another." Clinton Rossiter claims simply, "There has not been a great leader in this century who wasn't devious at certain times when it was necessary to achieve his objective."

Practicing politicians must, of course, use a different tack. They may note the use of duplicity but they are obliged to deplore it and, by implication, to exempt themselves from taint. It may be ironic but it is also essential that the condemnation of public fraud be part of the ritual of public deception. For what makes possible the effectiveness of any lie is that it not be seen for what it is. Thus, the *ideal* of truth becomes a practical if not a moral necessity.

A credibility "gap" arises when the appearance of truth-telling in public communication has been compromised. A credibility "crisis" arises when the limits of the plausible have been exceeded. If the parties to a political association become convinced that some of the key members habitually make crucial statements that do not bear an adequate relationship to reality, the association cannot function; the parties cannot get or keep their bearings or carry on ordinary contacts without minimal trust. But since the appearance of candor is as effective as candor itself, the minimum imperative is that the discovery of whatever lying there is not pass a certain threshold.

There is little doubt that such a threshold has been dangerously approached in this country and perhaps even already passed. Many

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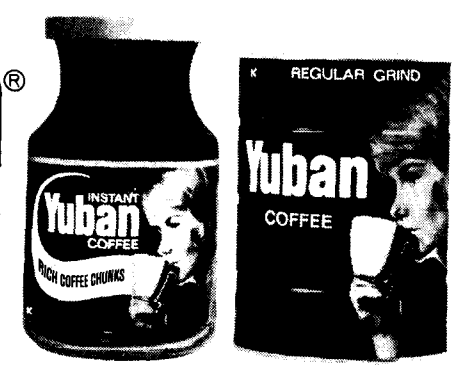

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explanations have been proffered for this, ranging from Toynbee's cosmic theory that American political morality has degenerated to the level of business morality, to the view that the credibility gap itself is just another media event or, rather, non-event. There is, however, another aspect which is not so much overlooked as understressed in explaining the deterioration of public confidence in those governing: the obvious ineptness of the public liars.

Did Lyndon Johnson, for example (to go no further back than this), think that the surreptitious bombing of North Vietnam would not, in time, be discovered and that this discovery would not have an effect? Did he really believe that the invariably favorable and inflated body counts would be swallowed forever? Was it necessary for him to encourage Robert McNamara to offer deadline after deadline for the winding down of the war only to be refuted again and again by the calendar? Could he have thought so little of the common sense of the American people as not to ask General Westmoreland to moderate his criminal and, after the Tet offensive, finally idiotic optimism before he became the subject of ridicule?

The record is no better as we approach the present. There is no other word than inept to describe George McGovern's sending of Pierre Salinger to Paris to talk with the North Vietnamese, denying it on national television, and then not making even remotely adequate provision to avoid exposure. As for Watergate itself, it would be hard to imagine a greater quotient of massive and transparent bumbling being exposed by probably one of the least subtle and effective of investigatory mechanisms: a Congressional committee.

It is reasonable to suppose that those who have governed the country recently are not much more reprehensible or much less able than their predecessors. What, then, accounts for the recent pattern of ineptness, and for the worsening problem of credibility of which it is a manifestation?

The reality with which political leaders must deal has become increasingly complex and may well have come to border on the unmanageable. Men operating with tighter deadlines and with a greater degree of ignorance, impotence, and apprehension may cultivate grace under pressure and look back with pride on the number of crises mastered, but they all know, deeply and inwardly, how tenuous and vulnerable their grip is. Indeed, many current historical trends—principal among them the relentless politicization of our lives, with its attendant blight of creeping legalism, and the inexorable centralization of power—reflect an effort to counter the inroads of chaos by extending the area of political influence. This effort has been unsuccessful. The disjunction between what goes on and the ability to guide and influence what goes on has become unmistakably greater. As a result, political leaders, ignoring the fact that the ultra-visible is the ultra-accountable, and often with desperation and even frenzy as their spur, have turned with increased frequency to controlling appearances as a way of controlling or covering reality.

But this effort has also failed. Successful lies must be infrequent and carefully crafted. Successful explanations, whether the intent be to deceive or to inform, must be kept within hailing distance of the truth. Otherwise, as it has recently and spectacularly done, reality will burst through the public description of events and render the very idea of government suspect.

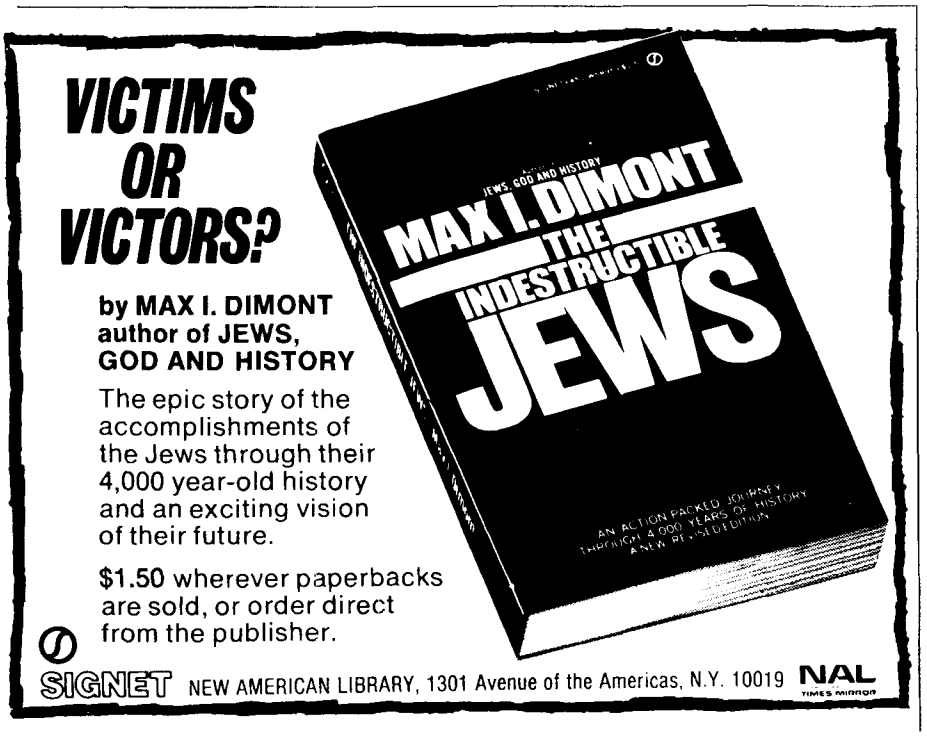
Storyteller

THE FERRARI IN THE BEDROOM. By JEAN SHEPHERD. *Dodd, Mead. 269 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD GROSSMAN

JEAN SHEPHERD, from Indiana originally, is a radio monologist whose show has been broadcast "live" every night for years by a strong AM station in New York City. Recently other stations around the country have started running his tapes, and he has been narrating a series, "Jean Shepherd's America," on public television. His collections of reminiscences and observations in book form, of which this is the third, have sold out big printings, though their titles never appeared on the New York *Times* best-seller list. A part of their sizable readership (Shepherd's books are probably not only bought, but read) is very likely drawn from the same audience that is devoted to *Play-*

EDWARD GROSSMAN'S *essays and reviews have appeared in* COMMENTARY, Harper's, and Saturday Review/World.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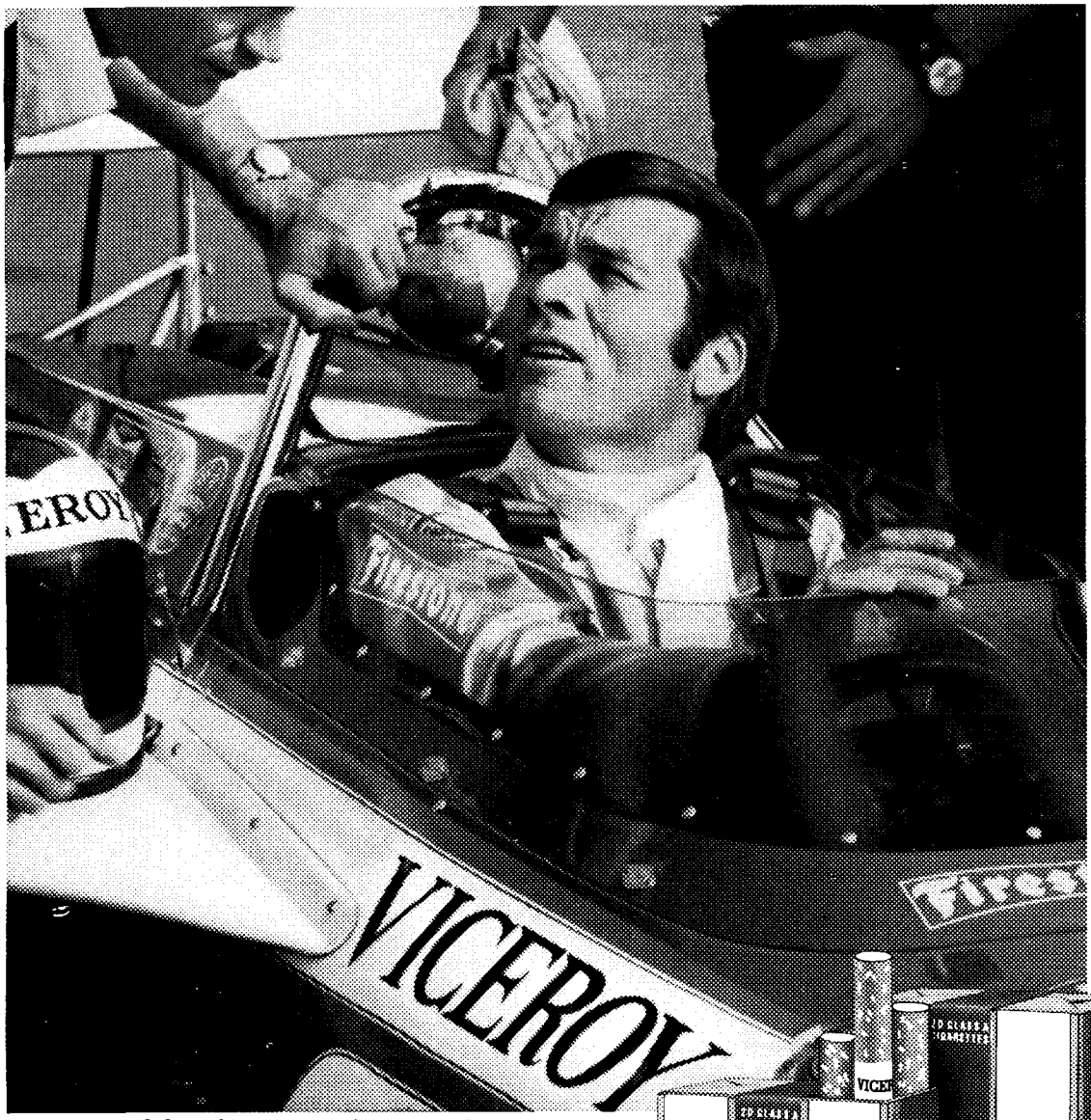

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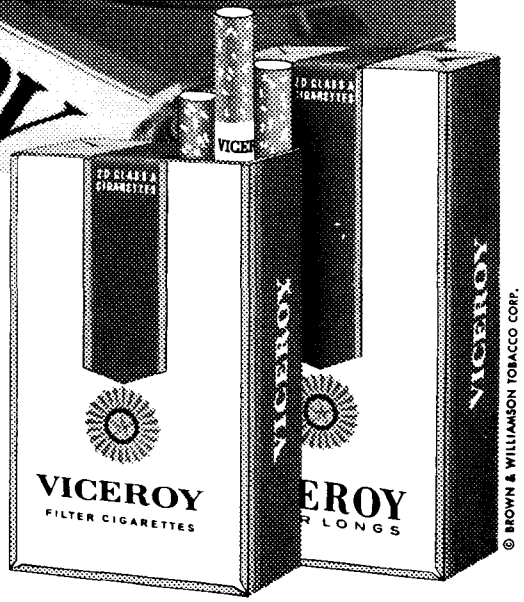

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boy—it was in *Playboy* that many of Shepherd's philosophical anecdotes first appeared in print, and he has the unique distinction of winning that magazine's "Humor Award" four times. Thus Shepherd is something of a success in the mass media. Millions of Americans, it can be taken for granted, are acquainted with his stories, and get satisfaction from listening to him go on and on, while others, who for various reasons may not read *Playboy,* listen to late night radio monologues, or watch public television, must, as one of the conditions of existing in the U.S., have been confronted by Shepherd's unidentified voice doing beer and car commercials at all hours and in many places, even if they have not paid attention.

Shepherd on the radio (it is on his regular radio show that he is at his quintessential) puts his listeners at ease by greeting them with affectionate disdain, and then starts talking at random, in a friendly, enthusiastically blasé and cynical, vulgar and seductive voice, about things he has seen, heard, read, been told of, or smelled that day in Manhattan, his adopted home. Seemingly improvising, he will pass on news of matters mostly bizarre and ridiculous, yet none of them anything but true and actual, he swears, and somehow significant, until, inevitably, one of these items, usually a sense impression, will touch a nerve of memory, and Shepherd will be impelled to tell a story about his wonderful childhood. As a cookie turned the thoughts of Proust's narrator to the past, so the odor of dynamite at a demolition site on Sixth Avenue startles Shepherd, bringing back vividly remote escapades with fireworks in Hammond, Indiana, when he was "a kid." Hammond (or "Hohman," as Shepherd disguises it in his books) is the equivalent of Combray or Hannibal in an endlessly articulated remembrance. It takes only a few hours of listening to Shepherd to get acquainted with this little universe: a town located between the cornfields and the steel mills, punished by mid-continental extremes of climate, lapped by the dirty water of Lake Michigan, populated by what sociologists used to call blue-collar workers, now "ethnics," in the tough tail-end of the Great Depression. This place and time are ritually re-experienced through the eyes, ears, etc. of Shepherd the boy, Shepherd the adult storyteller using, for this purpose, the historical present: "I'm a kid, see, and one day. . . ."

Suppose it is firecrackers Shepherd has been reminded of. He will get into a state, an ecstasy of memory. He will describe each particular brand of explosive in peculiar language: "The Cherry Bomb. Ah, what pristine, geometric tensile beauty; a perfect orb, brilliant carmine red, packed chockablock with latent terror and destruction." Though this quotation is from Shepherd's first book *(In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash)*, for which it may be assumed he had tapes of his monologues transcribed so that he could polish and fix them up to literary level, his extemporaneous language in front of the microphone is often just as gorgeous. The same recall and feeling are applied to stories of other childhood joys and woes—threadbare Christmases, all-day stickball games, the first blind date, Shepherd's father's passion for used cars. The element of nostalgia, and regret, in this, often gets thick. It sometimes leads to the drawing of implicit, and invidious, comparisons between the intensity and integrity of emotion, and of life therefore, in the poor Midwest in the late 30's, and the falseness and cheap luxury of life today.

Aimed for disaster (mostly small, humiliating disasters) as Shepherd's stories are, full of the pathetic aspirations of little people (children and parents), fairly swarming with the minutely observed details of secondhand furniture, cars, toys, and clothes as the stories may be, the feeling that comes off them is not bitter or unhappy. Partly because sickness and death do not intrude, partly thanks to Shepherd's incorrigible habit of talking bittersweetly about almost everything old at the expense of the new, his childhood and the Hard Times that he keeps insisting were "no fun, folks," come out romanticized. Which can't be said about his vision of New York—no diamonds on black velvet here, as twilight descends on Gotham's towers. Only gum wrappers in the subway and transvestites on the street. "New York" can mean the actual city, or it may serve as shorthand for what all of America, to Shepherd's amusement and dismay, is becoming. Some of his complaints may seem trivial, but they are heartfelt. "Of course," he remarks in the midst of remembering defunct makes of automobiles, "at that time cars had distinctive personalities and characteristics in themselves and did not all come stamped out of the same mold, painted with the same paint, and advertised by the same agency."

SHEPHERD's stock of stories sounds inexhaustible at first, but actually it is finite. A listener who cares to can make a list of two or three dozen stories that are told and retold with slightly different touches. Most of these stories were collected in Shepherd's previous books, so it might be expected that he would have to try something quite different in *The Ferrari in the Bedroom.* The difference, it turns out, is that the comparisons between past and present that were implicit before, are explicit now, and the contemporary incidents that triggered Shepherd's memory are liable now to furnish an occasion for a harangue that is not so much satirical or funny as embittered. This development does not come out of the blue. In a way it is a question of emphasis, proportion, and a sympathetic listener or reader might have sensed it coming. For example, in a story that opened in Shepherd's Manhattan apartment as "the long December afternoon was darkening into night," that had to do with Shepherd rummaging in a cardboard box full of evocative junk from childhood (Captain Midnight Photomatic Code-O-Graph badge, Tom Mix Special Sun Watch, genuine Mystic Voodoo Skull Ring, etc.), and that was published in his second book, *Wanda Hickey's Night of Golden Memories,* there was a passing reference to the "nasal tones of a twelve-year-old protest caroler [in the next apartment] singing *Jesus Don't Love Me Anymore, But I Got You,*

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Babe, the current spiritual smash." Considered in the context of Shepherd's work, which can be heavy-handed, this flick of the whip was light and on target, and it must have made all but the stupid and self-righteous laugh. In his latest collection, Shepherd dwells on the same foolishness in a way that may make the stupid and self-righteous laugh alone.

Thus, his sketch, "I Hear America Singing," pits two groups of passengers against each other in a transcontinental jet in which Shepherd finds himself. One group is composed of college students, the other of middle-aged traveling salesmen. The students are costumed in carefully frayed jeans and work shirts, and they are entertaining themselves (though not Shepherd or the other passengers) by strumming guitars and singing proletarian blues. The salesmen, with their "cauliflower ears" and "sun-reddened necks" are offended, and so is Shepherd. "You can't imagine them hungry," he says of the youngsters who are singing about deprivation while winging at high altitude on their parents' money. The salesmen, Shepherd surmises without evidence, fought at Anzio and Guadalcanal; the male students, weak-wristed as they strum, are sissies, he hints. No violence ensues in this confrontation between exaggeratedly idealized generations and classes. But it is clear, at the very least, that the younger generation's sentiments are phony, and its music worthless.

Probably, some of those who get as much pleasure from Shepherd's attacks as from his reminiscences are those disturbed and disgruntled and defensive people who may or may not have had a hard time in the Depression and the Second World War. "The nuttiness is spreading in our land," Shepherd declares, putting into words the tacit credo both of satirists and of moralists; the real-life models of Archie Bunker, too, must be sure that they know what he means. Yet they can't make up his audience entirely. He has a diverse appeal. It is just as easy to imagine the long-haired son or grandson of a hard-hat listening to Shepherd's delicious stories in bed after lights-out, or the man who reads *Playboy* giving a shiver of recognition when Shepherd remembers the horrors of teen-age courting. Shepherd's appeal is finally to a very wide range of American men and boys—the two categories are not mutually exclusive—and his appeal rests securely on the metaphor that adult life is a continuation of a boys' pickup sandlot game. In *The Ferrari in the Bedroom* this profound, stubborn figure of speech is put once and for all in Shepherd's recognizable voice:

> Jeff, at twelve, five-foot-three, weighs two hundred and thirty-six. Slow of foot, dull of mind, Jeff is a natural catcher. Jeff ultimately makes every team he goes out for, just barely. His bulk carries him through. Kids bounce off him like hailstones. However, in spite of his size he is a notably poor hitter, and his position in life is strictly Defensive. It is almost impossible to reach the plate when Jeff is squatting like a rubber Buddha with an inhumanly low center of gravity. Throughout life he will be known as "good old Jeff" and will be sent continually for more beer at parties and will be useful for pushing the car and all the other basic tasks that man falls heir to. Jeff is a born Pfc., which he will later be, and will spend a lot of time on Guard duty and washing trucks in the Motor Pool. He will eventually become Assistant Night Foreman in the Shipping Department of Amalgamated.

Jewish Thinkers

ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN JUDAISM AND MODERN PHILOSOPHY. By EMIL L. FACKENHEIM. *Basic Books. 275 pp. $10.00.*

IF NOT NOW, WHEN? TOWARD A RECONSTITUTION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE. By MORDECAI M. KAPLAN AND ARTHUR A. COHEN. *Schocken. 136 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by LEON WIESELTIER

God and the Jews, world history and its creator, pure eternity and suffering temporality—these are the poles which define the scope of Jewish theology and within which the arguments of Jewish thinkers must be situated. For the Jew, the natural and the supernatural coexist, and history is the arena of their interaction, the substance of which gradually fills man's life with meaning. The Jewish thinker must strike a balance between the two positions, avoiding an excessive commitment to either in his attempt to arrive at an understanding of what it means to exist as a Jew in this world before the God who once chose the Jews as His people, but now hides His face.

This concern of the Jewish religious thinker is by no means a new one, but the modern Jewish thinker faces a different and more complex challenge than did his medieval forebear. The secular constitution of modern society has transformed the meaning of religious identity, so that what was once a binding cultural-religious monolith has become something fragmented and utterly voluntary. In a world without God, why should Jews remain Jews? In the place of an obsolete historical necessity, a philosophical and theological necessity must be demonstrated. Jewish survival must now be argued for, and Jewish existence in the modern world justified for Jews. This justification must reformulate the supernatural pole of theology as well; arguing for the vitality of Judaism, the Jewish theologian must simultaneously reinstate the possibility of standing before a living, personal God.

Emil Fackenheim has addressed himself searchingly to this effort on many occasions and he continues to do so in his latest book as well. Spurred by the conviction that "ever since the Nazi Holocaust it is Western civilization that is on trial," Fackenheim accuses modern Jews of blithely accepting assumptions of the Enlightenment period which in reality make any "serious investigation of things Jewish" impossible. Fackenheim seeks to explode these assumptions—they include the premise that Jews can be fairly judged by a civilization that has pursued them—in the name of the authenticity of Jewish thought. One senses throughout Facken-

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heim's work a kind of pride, the pride of one who, having questioned his tradition from a critical distance that he will never relinquish, emerges confident of the validity of that tradition before all others.

It is Fackenheim's particular intention in his new book to deal with the relations between modern philosophy and modern Jewish thought (the latter he defines tentatively as "the critical inquiry into the modern destiny of the Jewish people and its faith"). The "encounters" he discusses are by no means peripheral to their protagonists; the stakes for each, we are told, are very high. For Fackenheim, philosophy's claim to having transcended medieval parochialism and arrived at a carefully conceived objectivity is put into doubt by the discovery that many of its most notable achievements do, in fact, operate out of specifically anti-Jewish or pro-Christian presuppositions. Yet Fackenheim is not engaged here in mere polemical exposé. He makes the much more serious claim that an anti-Jewish bias lies at the very heart of several philosophical systems, and that an objective and sober understanding of the principles of Jewish life and faith by the thinkers in question would have forced serious revisions of fundamental doctrines. The critique of Western civilization in terms of its attitude toward the Jews—a critique which Fackenheim as a philosopher of history had elsewhere made in analyzing the social and cultural preconditions of Auschwitz—is here transposed to the "pure" realm of thought.

Fackenheim confronts Judaism with formidable antagonists as he runs the gamut of modern philosophy: logical empiricism, Kantianism, Hegelianism, the existentialism of Heidegger and Sartre. The method remains the same throughout. The author sets forth the various critiques of Judaism (as formulated or implied by the philosophies in question), and demonstrates that these are based upon preconceptions rather than analysis. He then presents a Jewish response, grounded in an orientation radically different from the philosophical. The exposition is consistently patient and clear, and thoroughly documented; it is characterized everywhere by the unique virtues we have come to expect of Fackenheim's writings. The scholarship is impressive, as always, and there are numerous intellectual surprises to be found along the way (such as the consideration of Kierkegaard's treatment of Abraham against a Kantian background, or the specific explication of the anti-Jewish attitudes of the left-wing Hegelians in terms of the master's own perspective on Judaism).

The most significant of Judaism's "encounters" which Fackenheim discusses are those with Kant and Hegel. Kant revolutionized ethics by positing autonomy as the essence of morality; that is, according to the Kantian view, an imperative is not binding unless it is in conformity with one's will. Morality is the free self-legislation of man, who is an end in himself. Such a conception proves devastating to any notion of revealed morality, and in particular poses a challenge to Judaism. Commandments legislated by God and performed for His sake cannot, in the Kantian view, be essentially moral; on the other hand, imperatives which are self-legislated, however they may coincide with divine commandments, are not essentially religious. Kant in effect declares—the point becomes explicit in a small treatise on the Binding of Isaac—that God is in principle superfluous to morality, an assertion which quite obviously aims at the very core of Jewish faith.

At the center of the Kantian challenge lies the problem of the natural and the supernatural, and Fackenheim's task is thus to demonstrate the compatibility of transcendent God and immanent, ethical man. The Kantian challenge, he begins by noting, rests on a premise which Judaism does not share: that the Torah, i.e., the moral law, is a bar between man and God. To the contrary, he argues, for Judaism the Torah is a bridge between man and God; morality does not pre-

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clude the Jew's immediate relation with the Divine Presence. Fackenheim elucidates this position with what is perhaps the most theologically rewarding idea of the book, the "three-termed relationship" of revealed morality. According to this notion, an individual's ethical act is directed simultaneously at the other person and at God. Judaism recognizes the needs of the other as the occasion for a personal action, but goes on to make the "startling claim" that God Himself enters into the relationship. While the commandments must be performed for their own sake, as a moral response to reality, God is recognized as the origin of this reality, as the source of the value intrinsic to the world. God creates and insists upon the independent being of this immanent world, and is thus responsible for its moral law. Far from implying a logical contradiction, the doctrine of revealed morality testifies to that unique community of the natural and the supernatural which characterizes Judaism and which transcends the Kantian dilemma.

With regard to Hegel, Fackenheim writes that his thought "remains the deepest modern philosophical challenge to Jewish religious existence to this day." The Hegelian system seeks to frame a comprehensive, universal truth which can be realized in history. This ultimate truth is a synthesis of the truths of previous cultures, one which assigns these cultures to their proper historical stations. Hegel's program thus requires both a close and objective investigation of former cultures (including Judaism), and the immediate rejection of their claims to absoluteness. Although Fackenheim is impressed with the relative justice accorded Judaism in Hegel's exposition—the kernel of spiritual truth within Judaism is retained in the Hegelian system—still he points out that the system as a whole supersedes Judaism, which now assumes the character of partial truth.

As Fackenheim demonstrates, Hegel's understanding of Judaism is based upon the reification of Jewish theology. For Hegel, "the Jewish testimony must be simply unmoved and unmoving." Fackenheim disputes this rigid view, showing that, "in point of historical fact," Jewish history is characterized by a series of "internal Jewish self-mediations" which facilitated adaptation and survival in the midst of successive cultures. He undertakes a lengthy analysis of Hegel's philosophy of history to show that his preconceptions prevented Hegel from understanding the dynamic nature of Jewish faith. The analysis is meticulous, and constitutes a *tour de force* of intellectual history. Fackenheim emerges at the end with a powerful post-Hegelian, post-Auschwitz affirmation of Jewish existence, based, as one reviewer has put it, on a "corporate existentialism," on "the fact that the Jewish people is here."

JOINING Fackenheim in the small company of Jewish thinkers who have perceived the changed theological landscape of our times are, most notably, Mordecai M. Kaplan and Arthur A. Cohen. Wary of both a believing naiveté and a historical nihilism, each in his own way has attempted to plot a tenable course for modern Judaism. A recent collaboration—based on a series of tape-recorded conversations between the venerable Kaplan and his much younger colleague—has produced a remarkable volume, *If Not Now, When?*

The conversations, as they come to us in transcription, are vigorous, honest, at times intensely personal. The meeting ground of the two men is their "common passion and common concern—our love for the Jewish people and our wish that it remain whole, creative, enduring." But beyond what Kaplan and Cohen share, there is much on which they differ. For Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism, Judaism, like all religion, is primarily a social phenomenon, "the collective consciousness of an organic society." For Cohen, religion (to quote Whitehead) is what the individual does with his solitariness; man's confrontation with God is stark, isolating, directly experiential.

Appropriately enough, the dominant theological concern of these conversations is with the natural and the supernatural. In an earlier work on the subject, *The Natural and the Supernatural Jew*, Cohen had in fact been sharply critical of Kaplan's reduction of divinity to a complete immanence. The issue is joined here again and thoroughly pursued.

Kaplan's understanding of God is "derived entirely from social psychology." God, neither *persona* nor idea, is for Kaplan the process by which man experiences transcendence, and "transcendence is the part of nature known as organicity." But organicity is by no means a metaphysical abstraction; men experience transcendence through the organic nature of collective social existence. The revelation of God is the attainment of responsible social consciousness, and is articulated in ethical social action; moral value is the ultimate term of religious existence. For Kaplan, the term "God" is purely a functional (not a substantive) noun, providing "an answer to what man needs to be, to have and to do in

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order to achieve his destiny as a human being, or, collectively, as a family, tribe, or nation." Kaplan has, however, become sensitive to the change of theological reductionism, and denies that his God-term is itself naturalist. He is at pains in these conversations to define a "transnaturalism," in which "the supernatural is not implied [yet] the natural is extended transitively."

As against Kaplan's naturalism, or "transnaturalism," Cohen offers a supernaturalism whose precise meaning is somewhat obscure. Cohen claims to reject supernaturalism in any theurgic or magical form but he also argues against an idealistic notion of God, holding instead to a form of personalism: "Only if we can take Him seriously as a God can we take ourselves seriously as men"; "for me God is the person who continues to keep His secrets"; and, "the mature relation between man and God is transactional, both natural and transcendent." Kaplan predicates God upon human need, but for Cohen He is always already there. In the latter's very striking formulation, the historical tradition of the Jews "is a record of an ongoing transaction between two obduracies that never let go." Cohen writes that he has "never undertaken intercessionary prayer"; nonetheless he speaks of his "calling out to God, to the respondent Other." And, perhaps most dramatically, in words similar to a famous statement by Judah Halevi, "I believe in the existence of a God who brought my people out of Egypt." But Cohen also goes on to accept Kaplan's "transnaturalism" and calls God the "source of coherence, coherence in nature, coherence in history, coherence in values." Coherence, however, though objective, cannot be addressed; this ambiguity in his position Cohen does not resolve.

The theological abstractions of the discussions between Kaplan and Cohen are motivated throughout by a shared desire to diagnose and cure the disease from which, both men agree, contemporary Judaism is suffering. Kaplan in particular presses for the formulation of a program for action. Cohen insists upon a more patient refinement of ideology and outlook; he is suspicious of institutional prescriptions, and cites the spiritual emptiness of the contemporary synagogue. Here the difference between them appears again. For Kaplan, the religious question is still one of reconstruction, of the relegitimization of authority in the form of socially meaningful discipline. Cohen, on the other hand, argues that "we can never tie Jewish existence to any social or political polity as though that polity had the strength and indomitability to sustain us rather than we sustaining it."

"GENUINE conversation," wrote Buber, "means acceptance of otherness," and by this standard *If Not Now, When?* must be judged a moral success. In a sense, too, the conversation between Kaplan and Cohen really includes Emil Fackenheim as well, for all three of these seemingly disparate authors address a common theological problem: how to define the precarious relationship of the natural to the supernatural within Judaism. To this end Fackenheim stresses learning, Kaplan social reconstruction, Cohen introspective imagination. But they share a still more fundamental focus than this, for the way of each leads ultimately to the problem of ethics and seeks there its justification.

The ethical act is the response of purpose to the demands of reality. Requiring the consideration of both theory and practice, the eternally true and the pressingly tentative, it connects the transcendent and immanent dimensions of existence—and it is precisely on this ground that all three authors meet. The theological dilemma moves Fackenheim to formulate anew the substance of Jewish ethics, Kaplan to reconsider the integration of social morality and religious consciousness, Cohen to relate the individual's call to God to the community's call to the individual. The theological labor of all three is born of an acute sensitivity both to the timeless character of religious truth and to the immediate needs of the present moment in Jewish history. In their shared refusal to slight the claims of either, they make perhaps their greatest contribution to contemporary Jewish thought.

Business and Culture

ETHNIC ENTERPRISE IN AMERICA. By IVAN H. LIGHT. *University of California Press. 224 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by MURRAY FRIEDMAN

THE magazine *Black Enterprise* recently had occasion to list the one hundred largest black-owned and -managed businesses in the country. It made for instructive reading. Headed by Motown Industries (with sales of $40 million) and the Johnson Publishing Company ($23.1 million), the roster showed gross revenues of $473.4 million for the year previous. Now, while this clearly represents considerable progress—black businesses have made great strides in recent years—in actuality black-owned enterprises constitute a mere drop in America's trillion-dollar economy (for example, Sears alone has sales of $11 billion a year). Moreover, efforts by the Nixon administration to stimulate the growth of black capitalism are locked in controversy and conceded to have been a failure.

The reasons for the poor showing are familiar enough and require no detailed rehearsal. Widespread discrimination and disadvantage, if not outright bigotry, have cut off most blacks from entrepreneurial possibilities. In particular, a major stumbling block has been the difficulty which blacks have encountered in obtaining bank loans. Also, as has often been remarked, blacks, unlike other minorities, by and large have had no special consumer needs that might have required the establishment of enterprises directed toward their own group.

But these explanations do not tell the whole story. Other minorities, one might observe, have also suffered discrimination—among them the Irish, the Italians, the Jews, the Chinese, and the Japanese—but have not been prevented thereby from making their way in the world of commerce. In fact, many of these groups have turned adversity to advantage, building small, specialized busi-

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nesses which have served as springboards for larger-scale efforts and for the entry of their members into the general society. Altogether, both Orientals and foreign-born whites have been overrepresented in American business relative to native whites.

Taking all this into account, social scientists are increasingly looking to explain the reasons for the disappointing black commercial performance not only in terms of discrimination and poverty, but also as the consequence of certain cultural factors. As E. Franklin Frazier, the prominent black sociologist, has written: "Although no systematic study has been undertaken of the social causes of the failure of the Negro to achieve success as a businessman, it appears from what we know of the social and cultural history of the Negro that it is the result largely of the lack of traditions in the field of business enterprise." Pursuing this line of inquiry, Ivan H. Light, of the University of California, has produced an original and provocative study of the relationship between social and cultural systems and economic success, with specific reference to Chinese, Japanese, and black Americans.

Light argues that a critical factor in the ability of a group to create and develop business opportunities is its use of informal methods of financial cooperation, such as the rotating credit system. This system—known as *hui* among the Cantonese, as *ko, tanomoshi,* or *mukin* in Japan, and as *esusu* among the Yoruba in Africa—is defined as "an association formed upon a core of participants who agree to make regular contributions to a fund which is given, in whole or in part, to each contributor in rotation." But an even more important factor in the United States, according to Light, has been ethnicity—the extent to which certain shared customs and experiences have contributed to a group's collective economic well-being. This is especially the case with Chinese and Japanese immigrants, who brought with them a network of ties based on kinship and region. Thus, as Light describes it, newcomers had claims on family and clan for jobs, lodg-

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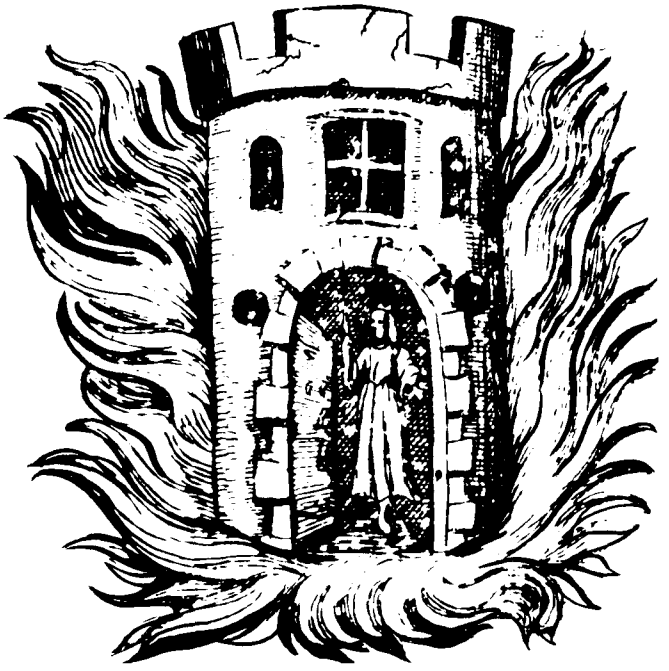

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ing, and other forms of assistance. Should illness or other misfortune incapacitate a member, rendering him unable to discharge his financial obligations, these would fall, through a system of "ethnic honor," on members of his family or clan. As the immigrants prospered and the level of prejudice declined, dependency lessened on these mechanisms of social trust.

Light notes that the rotating credit system was brought by blacks from Africa to the Western Hemisphere, particularly the West Indies; and indeed, West Indians had some success in developing businesses in Harlem in the 1930's. However, the system was never adopted by American blacks—it fell victim, apparently, to the harsh American experience. As Frank Tannenbaum and Stanley Elkins have pointed out, one of the most vicious consequences of slavery and of the various forms of degradation that followed it was the rupturing of black family ties and other group supports. In addition, unlike Chinese and Japanese immigrants, who sought to preserve their old customs and traditions, blacks moving out of the South did so in protest against a past they wished to obliterate from memory. Hindered in every way from normal development, blacks also came to exhibit a rampant individualism which, along with poverty and discrimination, contributed to the disorganization of life in the ghettos. "The drive for achievement derives from membership in groups which subject members to demands and standards," Light writes. "Apart from such a group context, there can be no persistent and disciplined drive for achievement in the face of inevitable daily frustrations."

Nor could organizations like the NAACP and the Urban League, vital as these have been in shaping a more favorable civil-rights climate, become a substitute for "ascriptively bounded moral communities." Over the years, only the black churches have emerged to play a role comparable to that of the Oriental networks, the Chinese *fong* and the Japanese *kenjinkai*. The Negro churches are essentially volunteer organizations and bastions of the black middle class. As such, they have traditionally served to facilitate the climb of the more bourgeois elements of the community, and to provide the community with its important leadership (Father Divine, Leon Sullivan, Martin Luther King).

Light demonstrates convincingly that a "usable" ethnic tradition and an effective system of kinship ties have served historically to enhance business success; the question remains, however, as to whether these can still form a basis for the development of a black business class today. The small, ethnically-oriented business, at one time a vehicle of upward mobility, is no longer a viable enterprise; in the highly complex economy of the 1970's, the small entrepreneur, black as well as white, is an anomaly. Attempts to foster black capitalism are thus strongly reminiscent of the (futile) efforts of Booker T. Washington, who in the 1890's urged blacks to turn to agriculture and the industrial arts at a time when America was rapidly evolving into a modern, corporate economy. It is for this reason that Andrew Brimmer, the only black governor on the Federal Reserve Board, along with Bayard Rustin, has taken a dim view of efforts to stimulate black capitalism and has stressed instead the need for blacks to seek connections with the giant, white-dominated corporations.

SINCE its publication, Light's book has come under strong attack. Some of this criticism, to my mind, has merit. For instance, his analysis of rotating credit systems and of the organization and development of ethnic businesses, while often perceptive, is somewhat limited in scope and fails to take all the relevant factors of the phenomenon into account. Also, the reason for the ability of the Chinese to accumulate cash, which Light hardly mentions, stems from their having few or no dependents, regular employment, and a cash income. Most important of all, in developing his thesis of culturally preferred economic and social systems, Light seems to play down the extraordinary force of the historic black experience of discrimination and disadvantage.

But not all the criticism which has been leveled at Light is justified, and some of it is downright unfair and malicious. Thus, one critic, Roger Daniels, has accused Light of "a kind of sociological Jensenism" and of suggesting, in effect, that blacks have "a deficient cultural inheritance." This is patently untrue and a gross misreading of Light's thesis. If Light seems to pay insufficient attention to black suffering in this country it is not because he is indifferent, but rather because, in dealing with his subject, he has chosen to focus on the lesser known role of family and clan ties with respect to business development. As for the charge of "Jensenism," the fact is that Light is squarely in the tradition of modern sociological discussion, which holds that particular social and historical experiences—rather than genetic inheritance—are the commanding considerations in understanding the subordinate place of blacks in American society. Why is it so difficult for Light's more extreme critics to grasp that a group's *total* experience, including ethnically and culturally evolved values and arrangements, significantly shape its development and determine its status?

The inability to come to grips with this issue is a serious matter, for it can prevent us from dealing realistically with the tribal basis of American society that stubbornly persists even as science and technology effect radical changes in our lives. Writers like Nathan Glazer, Andrew M. Greeley, Michael Novak, and Ivan H. Light, among others, have been attempting to provide a framework for an understanding of the special nature of the group experience in America and to develop new social and political strategies based on that understanding. In essence, they seek to add to the social and economic policies of liberalism an emphasis on family strength, group identity, and neighborhood coherence. Much as we need social change and reform, we also need to find the cement that holds a society together, and *Ethnic Enterprise in America* should aid in that search.

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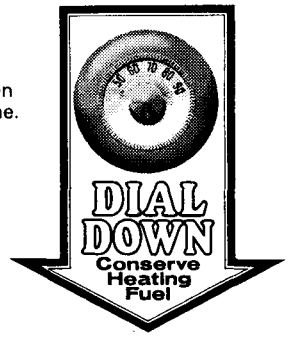

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